THE

Four Laſt Things:

Viz. { DEATH, JUDGMENT, HEAVEN, HELL,

Practically conſidered and applied,

In Several

DISCOURSES.

By *William Bates*, D. D.

Recommended as proper to be given at Funerals.

LONDON,
Printed for *Brabazon Aylmer*, at the Three Pigeons againſt the Royal Exchange in *Cornhil*. 1691.

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To the Right Honourable

RACHEL

Lady *RUSSEL.*

MADAM,

OF all Affairs for the compaſſing whereof Men are ſo diligent and ſollicitous, there is none of that abſolute neceſsity, and high importance, as the Preparation for Death and Judgment, and the immediate Conſequences of them, Heaven and Hell, to obtain the one, and eſcape the other. This requires the whole Man in his beſt vigour, and ſhould be the Work of the Day, but 'tis uſually delayed till the melancholy Evening of Age, or the twilight of Death. The Trifles of this World divert them from that main buſineſs, to which all other things ſhould

be ſubordinate. It equally deſerves Wonder and Compaſſion, that Death *which is ſo conſtantly in Mens view, ſhould be ſo ſeldom the matter of their application, when all are of the ſame Glaſs, made of the ſame frail natural Principles; and no Argument is more frequently & pathetically urged upon them.*

'Tis not ſtrange that deep Truths, that by the ſtrength and exerciſe of the mind are drawn like Gold out of the Mines, have no efficacy upon thoſe that are not capable of underſtanding them: but the Doctrines of Death *and* Judgment, Heaven *and* Hell, *are plain Truths, by Na- Natural, Moral, and Divine Evidence known to all; yet no more affect Men, than a Paradox of incredible Novelty. If the Doctrine of* Eternal Judgment *were but a probable Opinion, controverted with equal Arguments, yet 'tis a matter of ſuch vaſt concernment, that Reaſon requires all our poſ-*

ſible

ſible diligence to avoid an eternal evil that may be, the loſs of Celeſtial Glory, and the Torments of Hell: But ſince 'tis an infallible Truth, as certain as the Word of God, 'tis a Miracle to aſtoniſh Heaven and Earth, that Men live as careleſly as if they ſhould never die, and die as ſecurely as if they ſhould not live in the next ſtate, to receive the juſt puniſhment of their Sins. They are fearleſs whilſt Death is far off in their thoughts: and when Age has ſnowed upon their heads, that no Marks of decaying Nature ſhould appear, make their own Winter to flouriſh with anothers Spring. But 'tis in vain, for Death knows them under their diſguiſe, and will not ſtay beyond the appointed time. And in that deciſive hour, Infidelity or Preſumption hardens Men to paſs as quietly and boldly in appearance into another world, as unfeigned Faith, and a regular lively Hope in the Promiſes of the Goſpel.

But as deceitful Phyſick ſtops the Fit for the preſent, that will return more violently and fatally afterwards: So a counterfeit ſhort Peace tranſmits them to everlaſting Sorrows.

The deſign of the following DISCOURSE *is to awaken Men, that they may be wiſe and conſider their latter end: to ſecure an intereſt in our Redeemer, who has diſarmed Death of its Sting, and made that Enemy our Friend: and to practiſe dying every day, by withdrawing their hearts from the vanities of this tranſient World, that have ſuch a pernicious influence to excite the carnal Appetites, and ſtupify the Conſcience, which are the true cauſes of their ſin and Miſery. And what can be more powerful to render them temperate and ſober in the uſe of preſent things, vigilant and ſerious in their preparations for their great and final Change, than the remembrance that* Death *is immediately attended*

with Judgment, and Judgment with Bleſſedneſs or Miſery for ever. I know this Argument is naturally diſpleaſing, but the uſefulneſs ſhould recommend it to our moſt ſolemn and compoſed thoughts, before all the vain entertainments of the Fancy and ſenſual Affections. As Herbs of Medicinal virtue, that are not pleaſing to the ſight or ſmell, yet are valued by the Skilful as treaſures of Health; and preferr'd before the faireſt Flowers that are perfum'd and painted by Nature, ſo as to excel the richeſt luſtre of Solomon's Glory.

The Body is in a continual Conſumption, and no Art can long preſerve it: but whilſt the outward Man is irrecoverably declining and waſting, if the Inward Man be aſcending and renewing to perfection, the advantage is incomparable. O how comfortable is it to a holy Believer in the parting hour to commit his Spirit into the hands

of

of his Heavenly Father! (for thus he is authorized and encouraged by our Saviour's Example) and lay down the Fleſh to reſt in Hope: *for Chriſt is the Guardian of the Grave,* has the Keys of Death, *and will revive the Bodies of his Saints incorruptible and immortal, the Copies of his own glorious Body.*

The immediate Recompences of Eternal Judgment, Heaven and Hell, are worthy of our moſt attentive and applicative Thoughts, that we obtain the one, and eſcape the other. Heaven is the true Happineſs of the reaſonable Creature, and is the firſt and laſt in the order of things deſireable; the firſt for its attractive Excellence, the laſt in its conſummate Fruition. This may be certainly and perpetually enjoyed by all who ſincerely and diligently ſeek it. If in the very different States of Life here, there were any uncapable of Eternal Life, or that have another

Object

Object for their laſt End, there might be ſome reaſon why they ſhould be coldly affected towards Celeſtial Happineſs, and to juſtify their ſole pretentions to the Things of Time, wherein their Intereſts are confin'd: but the offer of Heaven regards all that upon God's Terms will accept of it. The moſt ſenſible inequality, that Riches, Dignity, or any temporal Accident makes between Men here, is ſo true a Nothing in compariſon of Eternal Glory, that it makes no difference of one from another as to the obtaining it. For this Reaſon it moſt nearly concerns every Perſon, First to ſeek the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Righteouſneſs thereof, *as the only way to aſcend to it.*

The ſerious conſideration of the everlaſting Hell prepared for unreformed Sinners, is moſt neceſſary and uſeful, tho carnal Men are extreamly averſe from thinking on that terrible Object. For this is the firſt Motive that turns

Men

Men from Sin to Holineſs. The Joys of Heaven being Spiritual and Divine, have no attractive influence upon the carnal Affections, would never convert and reform any; but the Torment of Fire being moſt evident and vehement to Senſe, is ſtrongly repreſented by the Imagination, and moves the Affections. How many by ſolemn and believing Thoughts of the unquenchable Fire, have felt the Miracle upon the three Children in the Furnace, renewed in themſelves, their ſtrong Cords, the obſtinate Habits of Sin burnt aſunder, and their Powers reſtor'd to the freedom of Duty, the bleſſed Liberty of Obedience. In this reſpect the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wiſdom, *that directs us in the Way to Bleſſedneſs.*

Madam, *I ſhall not attempt the celebrating your Ladiſhip's Vertues, that render you a bright Ornament of your Sex, and more truly Honourable than*

your

your Noble Deſcent and Alliance; but direct my beſt Deſires to God, that your Family may be a ſingular and eminent Example of the Divine Favour: that the fading Gloſs of this World may not deceive you, but your Heart may be above, where your Treaſure is; *that you may live to God and your Soul, for Heaven and Eternity. I am,*

Madam,

Your Honour's very humble and faithful Servant,

WILLIAM BATES.

The Bookſeller's Advertiſement.

THE Four Laſt Things, *Death* and *Judgement*, *Heaven* and *Hell*, are Subjects of that great Importance, and ſo nearly concerns all Perſons, that ſerious Diſcourſes publiſh'd upon them, deſerve the Reader's beſt Attention and Application. And that they may be of more diffuſive and general Benefit, it will be a proper Means, that (according to the Examples of ſome pious Perſons) Books treating of thoſe ſolemn Arguments BE GIVEN AT FUNERALS, AS A FUNERAL-LEGACY: When according to the obſervation of the wiſe Preacher, *The Living lay to Heart their own Frailty*, and are more receptive of Holy Counſels to prepare for their great Change from Time to Eternity, and would affect their Minds with the preſent Inſtance of Mortality, much better than Wine, Sweatmeats, Gloves or Rings, or unprofitable Talk, as is too uſual at ſuch Solemnities.

All ſerious practical Books are proper for this Deſign, which may be of any Price or Bigneſs: And if Bound in Black, with a Cypher of Mortality, will be very decent: And ſome Memorables of the Life of the Deceaſed (if deſired) may be printed on a Leaf, or more, and bound with it. Several Books ſo bound, may be ſeen at the Three Pigeons againſt the Royal Exchange in *Cornhil*.

B. A.

OF DEATH.

HEB. 2. 15.

And deliver them, who through fear of Death were all their Life-time ſubject to Bondage.

IN the firſt Chapter of this Epiſtle, the *Proofs* of the Eternal Deity of Chriſt are produced with that evidence of *Scripture-Light*, that only a *vailed Heart*, obſtinate Infidelity can reſiſt. The Medium which the inſpired Penman makes uſe of, is, the comparing

him with the Angels, the moſt noble Flower of the Creation, and ſhewing that he is infinitely dignified above them. This he does by a ſtrong connexion of Arguments: Firſt, By his Title that is divinely high and peculiar to himſelf. He is declared by the Teſtimony of the eternal Father to *be his Son*, in the moſt proper and ſublime ſenſe: *begotten of him*, and therefore having the ſame eſſential Perfections of the Godhead in their uncreated Glory. But the Angels are not dignified with this Name in any Places of Scripture, where the Excellency of the Angels is in the fulleſt Terms expreſſed. And that this Name is taken from his Nature, is clearly proved: becauſe Adoration is due to him upon this account, even from the Angels of the higheſt Order. *When he bringeth in the firſt-begotten into the World, he ſaith, And let all the Angels of God worſhip him.*

Ver. 4, 5.

Ver. 6.

Divine Worſhip is a Prerogative inſeparably annex'd to the Deity, both upon the account of the ſupream Excellencies of the Nature of God, and his Relation to Angels and Men as Creator and Preſerver, the Fountain of their Being and Happineſs. This without

cut

out the moſt open defiance of his Authority, cannot be given to a meer Creature; and by the Command of God himſelf is to be performed as a Reſpect due to the filial Godhead. The Argument proceeds from the Name to the Offices. *Of the Angels he ſaith,* Ver. 7. *Who maketh his Angels Spirits, and his Miniſters a flame of Fire.* They are the prime Inſtruments of his Providence, moſt zealous and active to accompliſh his Pleaſure. But the Son *is God,* not by Analogy and Deputation as Princes are, nor with a limitation and diminution, as *Moſes* was made *a God to Pharaoh,* but abſolutely and really as ſubſiſting in the Divine Nature: And conſequently he is the Supreme King, and to him the Enſigns of Majeſty divinely Royal are aſcribed: *But unto the Son he ſaith, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a Scepter of Righteouſneſs is the Scepter of thy Kingdom:* Ver. 8. Whereas the Scepters of Earthly Kings are often unrighteouſly manag'd, and their Thrones ruinouſly fall. There is a further Confirmation from his Works, that are divinely great and glorious, wherein no Creature has any ſhare of Efficiency. The making of Deut. 6. 13. & 10. 20.

the World is aſcribed to him. *Thou,*
Ver. 10. *Lord, in the beginning haſt laid the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Works of thy Hands.*

The Divine Attributes, the peculiar Character of the Deity belong to him: Eternity and Immutability. The moſt ſolid parts of the viſible Creation *ſhall periſh and be changed: but thou remaineſt, and art the ſame.* His Life is an intire, uniform, unchangeable Perfection. His Glory and Felicity are in the ſame invariable Tenor for ever poſſeſs'd by him. Laſtly, the Son ſits in that qua-
Ver. 13. lity *at the right Hand of the Father*, in the Society of Empire, as equal to him in Power and Honour, commanding all in the viſible and inviſible World, moſt eaſily and irreſiſtibly, tho gradually, ſubduing his Enemies to a conſummate Victory. But the Angels, ſo nume-
Ver. 14. rous and powerful, *are miniſtring Spirits*, employed for the defence and benefit of the Church.

From this ſummary account we may underſtand how firmly the Divinity of Chriſt is eſtabliſh'd in the Scripture. For thoſe Paſſages of the Prophets, that ſpeak of the God of *Iſrael* as Creator, and the ſole Object of Adoration, are di-

directly referr'd to Jeſus Chriſt. And the Name *Jehovah*, the Majeſty of which conſiſts in its being incommunicable, is attributed to him. This is the Foundation upon which the whole Fabrick of the Goſpel is built. The Office of Mediator in the Prophetical, Prieſtly, and Regal Adminiſtration is neceſſarily join'd with the Divinity of his Perſon. And the revelation of it from Heaven, is as clear as the Sun is viſible in the Firmament. All the Difficulties in our conceiving this great Myſtery of Godlineſs, are but like the Shadows that attend the Light. And all the heretical Subtilties to pervert the Senſe of ſuch plain and poſitive Texts, are as impertinent as impious. Pſal. 97. 9.

This being eſtabliſh'd, the Apoſtle proceeds to give an account of the Son of God's aſſuming the Humane Nature, and ſubmitting to Sufferings and Death. This is a Divine Secret ſo miraculouſly ſtrange, that the Contrivance was without the Compaſs of the Angelical Minds, and the diſcovery of it is only by ſupernatural Revelation; but when revealed, the account of it is ſo open and conſentaneous to Reaſon, as being the moſt congruous Means for

the illuſtration of God's Glory in the ſaving loſt Men, that the humane Mind, if not deeply corrupted with the tincture of Prejudice, muſt conſent to it *as worthy of all Acceptation.*

The ſubſtance of his reaſoning is this, That it was the product of the moſt wiſe, merciful, and righteous Counſel of God, that the Saviour of Men ſhould have Communion with them in their Nature, that he might have a Right to redeem them by his Alliance and Propinquity: for *he that ſanctifies, and they that are ſanctified,* Chap. 2. 11. *are all one:* and that he might undergo Sufferings, even to death, for the price of their Redemption, and the remedy of their Infirmities: *Foraſmuch as the Children are partakers of Fleſh and Blood, he alſo likewiſe took part of the ſame, that through Death he might deſtroy him that had the Power of Death, that is the Devil: And deliver them who through fear of Death, were all their Lives ſubject to Bondage.*

The Devil is ſaid to have the Power of Death.

1. Becauſe he induces Men to commit Sin, that meritoriouſly renders them liable to Death. He tempted the firſt

firſt Man *cum effectu, and was a Murderer from the beginning.*

2. In that he inſpires them with furious Thoughts, and inflames their Paſſions, from whence proceed Striſes and Wars, that efficiently cauſe Death. He is ſupream in all the Arts of Miſchief, and always intent upon Evil. 'Tis by his Inſtigation that Men become like raging Beaſts, animated and bent on mutual Slaughter.

3. Becauſe he is many times the Executioner of God's Wrath, and inflicts Death upon rebellious and incorrigible Sinners. 'Tis recorded by the Pſalmiſt, That *God caſt upon the Egyptians the fierceneſs of his Anger, Wrath, Indignation, and Trouble; by ſending evil Angels:* Thoſe Princes of the Air, the Inſtruments of the Thunder and fiery Storm of Hail that deſtroyed them. Pſal. 78. 49.

4. Becauſe he makes Death more formidable to Sinners, by heightning their guilty Fears of God's Tribunal. The falſe Spirit tempts Men to ſin by many Blandiſhments, but afterward he is a ſevere Accuſer of them to God, and to themſelves.

Laſtly, This Title may ſignify his tormenting Sinners with unrelenting

Cruelty in Hell, which is the ſecond Death.

Now theſe Evils being the penal Conſequence of Sin, our Saviour by his Death appeas'd the injur'd Juſtice of God, and thereby deſtroyed the cruel Tyranny of the Devil. *As the Lamb of God*, in the notion of a Sacrifice, he overcomes our ſpiritual Enemies. Sin, Satan and Death, lie vanquiſh'd at the foot of his Croſs. Beſides, our Saviour having felt ſuch Sorrows and Infirmities as are uſual to his People, by that correſpondence and reſemblance between them, is compaſſionately inclin'd to relieve them.

I ſhall now inſiſt upon the bleſſed Priviledg of Believers ſet down in the Text, *viz.*

That Jeſus Chriſt by his Death frees his People from the ſervile tormenting fear of Death.

In proſecuting the Point, I ſhall, 1. Conſider the Account the Scripture gives of Death's entrance into the World. 2. Shew what the fear of Death includes, and the Bondage conſequent to it. 3. How the Death of Chriſt

Chriſt frees us from the thraldom of that Fear. 4. Who are partakers of this bleſſed Priviledg.

And then apply it.

I. The Scripture gives an account of Death's entrance into the World, in a threefold Reſpect.

1. As the Deſert of Sin. 2. As the Effect of the divine Decree. 3. As the Sentence of the Law.

1. As the Deſert of Sin. The firſt Deſign of the Creator was his own Glory in conjunction with the Happineſs of Man. He was made accordingly holy in Perfection, placed in Paradiſe, and his State contained all the Ingredients of Felicity proper to his Nature. He was capable of dying, as ſad Experience proves, yet no Accident from without, no Diſtemper from within had impair'd his Vigour, and made him actually ſubject to Death without Sin. Whilſt innocent he was immortal, not from everlaſting Principles of Nature, but by Divine Preſervation, of which the Tree of Life was the ordained Means and ſacramental Pledg. For God unchangeably loves his own

own Image: and though by his Sovereignty and abſolute Power he may reſume the Being he gives, yet his Goodneſs and Covenant were a ſacred aſſurance that Mans happy Life ſhould run parallel with his perſeverance in his Duty. This Immortality was not the ſingular Privileg of *Adam*'s Perſon, but had been the Inheritance of all his Progeny. But he ſoon revolting from his juſt Obedience, of Immortal became Mortal, and according to the original Eſtabliſhment of Propagation, tranſmitted his Nature with the guilt and poiſon of Sin to all his Poſterity. *Thus by one Man Sin entred into the* Rom. 5. 12. *World, and Death by Sin, and ſo Death paſſed upon all Men, for that all have ſinned.* As his Obedience had been rewarded, ſo his Rebellion is puniſh'd in all that naturally deſcend from him. From hence it is, that ſo numerous a part of Mankind are cut off before the commiſſion of actual Sin. Death enters into the Forge of Life, and deſtroys the Conception that newly began to live. And what is more righteous than that Man when he diſobeyed the Author of Life, ſhould forfeit his Life and Bleſſedneſs. The Soul voluntarily loſt

loſt the ſpiritual Life by forſaking God, therefore unwillingly loſes the natural Life by expulſion from the Body. The Apoſtle ſays, *the Wages of Sin is Death*, not only that of the Body, but the Death of the Soul, which is a dreadful Concomitant of it. And from hence we may diſcover the falſe Philoſophy of the wiſeſt Heathens in their Opinion of Death. They judged it to be the primary neceſſity and condition of Nature, fix'd by irreſiſtible Fate: and not underſtanding the true and juſt reaſon of its coming into the World, they could not apply a ſufficient Remedy againſt its Evil.

Anima volens perdidit vivere, nolens ergo perdat & vivificare.

Rom. 6. 23.

Hac lege intraverant, ut exirent. *Senec.*

2. As the Effect of the divine Decree reſpecting Sin. This is diſcovered by Revelation in the Word of God, and by the real execution of it. *It is appointed to Men once to die.* This Decree is univerſal and unrepealable. *One Generation paſſeth away, and another Generation cometh:* like the ebbing and flowing of the Sea in its ſtated Periods. Nothing can interrupt or fruſtrate this Appointment. There are divers Conditions of Men, and various ways of living in the World; ſome are high in Dignity, others are level with the Earth:

Heb. 9. 27.

Eccleſ. 1. 4.

Earth: ſome walk in a Carpet-way ſmooth and eaſy, others in a thorny and troubleſom: ſome walk on the golden Sands, others on the Mire: but the ſame uncontroulable neceſſity of dying involves all. And whatever the way be, whether pleaſant or doleful, yet every one paſſes in it with equal Steps, meaſured by the ſame invariable ſpaces of Hours and Days, and arrive at the ſame common End of Life. Thoſe who are regarded as viſible Deities amongſt Men, that can by their Breath raiſe the Low, and depreſs the Lofty, that have the Lives of Millions in their Power; yet when the ordained Time is come, as they cannot bribe the accuſing Conſcience for a minute's Silence, ſo neither delay Death. *I have ſaid ye are Gods, but ye ſhall die like Men.*

3. Death is to be conſidered as the Sentence of the Law. The reaſonable Creature was made under a Law the Rule of his Actions. The moral Law directed him how to continue in his holy and bleſſed State: To which was annex'd the Precept of not eating of the Tree of Knowledg of Good and Evil, only as a mark of his Subjection, and for

for the trial of his Obedience. This Precept had an infallible Sanction by the moſt high Law-giver: *In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt die the Death.* Man did not keep this Command of ſo eaſy Obſervation, and juſtly incurr'd its doom. As Sin is the violation of the Law, ſo Death is the violation of the Sinner in his Nature and Felicity retorted from the Law. Gen. 2. 17.

The Deaths of Men are very different in their kinds; and are compriſed in the words of *David* concerning *Saul*; *The Lord ſhall ſmite him, or his Day ſhall come to die, or he ſhall deſcend into the Battel, and periſh.* Sometimes they are cut off by the immediate flaming Hand of God, for the more exemplary revenge of Sin; ſometimes by ſurpriſing Accidents; ſometimes by bloody Contentions; ſometimes by conſuming Diſeaſes. But though Death be not uniform, yet 'tis always the execution of the Law upon Offenders. As of thoſe who are condemned by humane Juſtice, ſome ſuffer a more eaſy and honourable Death, others a more diſgraceful and torturing; ſome are beheaded, others are crucified, yet all die as Malefactors. Thus ſome die a natural 1 Sam. 26. 10.

tural Death, others a violent; ſome by a gentle preparing Sickneſs without reluctation, others die upon the Rack by ſharp Pains: ſome die attended with their Friends, and all Supplies to ſweeten their Paſſage, others forſaken of all Comforters: yet Death is the ſame Sentence of the Law upon all Men. And this, if duly conſidered, makes it terrible in whatever ſhape it appears.

II. The next Thing to be conſidered is, What the fear of Death includes, and the Bondage that is conſequent to it. This I ſhall explain and amplify, by conſidering four Things.

1. The nature of Fear in general, as applicable to the preſent Subject.

2. The particular Cauſes that render Death ſo fearful.

3. The degree of this Fear expreſs'd by Bondage.

4. How it comes to paſs that Men are not always under the actual fear of Death, but ſubject to the Revolutions of it all their Lives.

1. I will conſider the nature of Fear in general, as applicable to the preſent Subject.

Fear

Fear is a Paſſion implanted in Nature, that cauſes a flight from an approaching Evil. Three things are requiſite to qualify the Object, and make it fearful.

(1.) The Evil muſt be apprehended. Knowledg, or at leaſt Suſpicion, excites Fear, by repreſenting an Evil that is likely to ſeize upon us. Till the Mind diſcern the Danger, the Paſſions are unmoved: and imaginary Evils by the mere apprehenſion, are as ſtrongly fear'd as real.

(2.) The Evil muſt be future. For the naked Theory of the moſt pernicious Evil does not wound the Soul, but the apprehenſion of falling under it. If Reaſon can open an Expedient to prevent an Evil, this Paſſion is quiet. And Fear preciſely regards its Object as to come. Preſent Evils induce Grief and Sorrow: paſt Evils by reflection affect with Joy, and give a quicker reliſh to preſent Felicity. Approaching Evils alarm us with Fear.

(3.) The Evil muſt be apprehended as prevalent to make it fearful. For if by compariſon we find our Strength ſuperior, we either neglect the Evil for its levity, or determine to encounter it;

it; and reſiſtance is the proper effect of Anger, not of Fear. But when an impendent Evil is too hard for us, the Soul ſhrinks and recoils from it.

Now all theſe Qualifications that make an Object fearful, concur in Death.

1. 'Tis an Evil univerſally known. The frequent Funerals are a real demonſtration that ſpeaks ſenſibly to our eyes, that Death reigns in the World. On every ſide Death is in our view, and the ſhadow of it darkens our brighteſt Days.

2. 'Tis certainly future. All the wretched Accidents of this Life, ſuch as concern us in our Perſons, Relations, Eſtates and Intereſts; a thouſand Diſaſters that a jealous Fear and active Fancy will extend and amplify; as they may, ſo they may not happen to us. And from this mixture of contrary Poſſibilities, from the uncertainty of event, Hope, that is an inſinuating Paſſion, mixes with Fear, and derives Comfort. For as ſometimes a ſudden Evil ſurprizes not forethought of; ſo often the Evil that was ſadly expected, never comes to paſs. *But what Man is he that lives, and ſhall not ſee Death?* Who is ſo vain as to pleaſe himſelf with an imagination

Pſal. 89. 4.

gination of Immortality here? Though Men are diſtinguiſh'd in the condition of Living, yet all are equal in the neceſſity of Dying. Humane Greatneſs in every kind, Nobility, Riches, Empire cannot protect from the ſudden and Sovereign Hand of Death, that overthrows all. The moſt conſpicuous difference in this World is between the Victorious, and the Vanquiſh'd proſtrate at their Feet: but Death makes them equal. Then the wretched Captive ſhall upbraid the proud Conqueror, *Art thou become weak as we? Art thou become like us?* The Expreſſions of Scripture concerning the frailty of Man are often literally and preciſely verified: *He is like the Graſs, in the morning it flouriſhes and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth.* Death is a prevalent inſuperable Evil, hence the proverbial Expreſſion, *Strong as Death that ſubdues all, cruel as the Grave that ſpares none.* 'Tis in vain to ſtruggle with the pangs of Death. No Simples in Nature, no Compoſitions of Art, no Influence of the Stars, no Power of Angels, can ſupport the dying Body, or retain the flitting Soul. *There is no Man hath power over the Spirit to retain* Eccleſ. 8. 8.

the Spirit; neither hath he power in the day of Death: and there is no discharge in that War. The Body sinks in the Conflict, and *Death feeds on its prostrate Prey in the Grave.*

2. I shall consider more particularly the Causes that render Death so fearful to Men: 1. In the apprehension of Nature. 2. In the apprehension of Conscience. 1. In the apprehension of Nature, Death hath this Name engraven in its forehead, *Ultimum terribilium*, the Supreme of terrible things, upon several accounts.

1. Because usually Sickness and Pains languishing or tormenting, make the first Changes in the Body, and the natural Death is violent. This *Hezekiah* complained of with a mournful accent,
Isa. 38. *He will cut me off with pining Sickness: from day even to night thou wilt make an end of me. I reckoned till morning, that as a Lion, so will he break all my Bones.* A Troop of Diseases are the forerunners of this *King of Terrors*. There is a preceding Encounter, and sometimes very fierce, that Nature feels the cruel Victory before it yields to this Enemy. As a Ship that is tost by a mighty Tempest, and by the concussion of the Winds and

and Waves loſes its Rudder and Maſts, takes in water in every part, and gradually ſinks into the Ocean: So in the ſhipwrack of Nature, the Body is ſo ſhaken and weakned by the violence of a Diſeaſe, that the Senſes, the animal and vital Operations decline, and at laſt are extinguiſh'd in Death.

2. Death conſidered in the ſtricteſt propriety, as deſtructive of the natural Being, that is our firſt and moſt valuable Good in the order of Nature, is the juſt object of Fear. The Union between Soul and Body is very intimate and dear, and like *David* and *Jonathan* they part unwillingly. Nature has a ſhare in the beſt Men, and works as Nature. St. *Paul* declares, *we would not be unclothed*, not finally put off the Body, but have it glorified in conjunction with the Soul. Our bleſſed Saviour, without the leaſt impeachment of the Rectitude and Perfection of his Nature, expreſs'd an averſeneſs from Death, and with ſubmiſſion to the divine Will deſired a freedom from it. His Affections were holy and humane, and moved according to the quality of their Objects.

3. The natural Conſequents of Death render it fearful. Life is the foundation of all natural Enjoyments; and the Loſs of it induces the loſs of all for ever. 'Tis from hence that ſuch Evils that are conſiſtent with Life, and deprive us only of ſome particular Content and Pleaſure, are willingly choſen rather than Death. The forfeiture of Eſtate, the degrading from Honour, the confinement to a perpetual Priſon, the baniſhing from our native *Country*, are leſs Penalties than Death.

There is a natural love of Society in Man, and Death removes from all. The Grave is a frightful Solitude. There is no Converſation in the Territories of Darkneſs. This alſo *Hezekiah* in his apprehenſions of Death ſpeaks of with Tears: *I ſhall ſee Man no more in the Land of the Living.* As in the Night, the World is an univerſal Grave, all Things are in a dead Silence; Palaces, Courts of Juſtice, Temples, Theaters, Schools, and all Places of publick Converſation are ſhut up: the Noiſe and Rumour that keeps Men in continual Obſervation and Action ceaſes. Thus when the Sun of this preſent Life is ſet, all the Affairs and Buſineſs, all the vain

Iſa. 38. 11.

Dies moritur in noctem, & tenebrisuſque quaque ſepelitur; funeſtatur mundi honor, omnis ſubſtantia denigratur, ſordent, ſilent, ſtupent cuncta: ubiq; juſtitium eſt. *Tertul.* de Reſurrec. Car.

Joys

Joys of Company, Feasting, Dancing, Musick, Gaming, ceases. Every one among the Dead is confined to his sealed obscure Cell, and is alone an entertainment for the Worms.

The Psalmist saith of Princes, *Their Breath goeth forth, they return to the Earth, in that very day their Thoughts*, their glorious compassing Thoughts, *perish*. This the Historian observes was verified in *Julius Cesar*: After his assuming the Imperial Dignity, he thought to reduce the numerous Laws of the *Romans* into a few Volumes, comprising the Substance and Reason of all; to enrich and adorn the City of *Rome*, as was becoming the Regent of the World: to epitomise the Works of the most learned *Grecians* and *Romans* for the publick Benefit. And whilst he was designing and pursuing these, and other vast and noble Things, Death surprised him, and broke off all his Enterprises.

Talia agentem atque meditantem mors prævenit. *Suton.*

At the terrible Gate that opens into Eternity, Men are stripp'd of all their Honours and Treasures, *and as naked as they come into the World, go out of it. Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the Glory of his House is increased.* Psal. 49. 16, 17.

For when he dieth, he ſhall carry nothing away; his Glory ſhall not deſcend after him. Death equally vilifies, makes loathſom and ghaſtly the Bodies of Men, and reduces them to ſordid Duſt. In the Grave the * Duſt is as precious and powerful of one as of another. Civil Diſtinctions are limited to the preſent time. The prodigious Statue in *Nebuhadnezzar*'s Viſion, *Dan.* 2. 32, 33, 34, 35. while it was upright, the Parts were really and viſibly diſtinct: *The Head was of fine Gold, the Breaſt and Arms of Silver, the Belly and Thighs of Braſs, the Legs of Iron, the Feet part of Iron and part of Clay: but when the Stone cut out without hands, ſmote the Image upon the Feet, then was the Iron, the Clay, the Braſs, the Silver, and the Gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the Chaff the Wind carries away.* Who can diſtinguiſh between Royal Duſt taken out of magnificent Tombs, and Plebean Duſt from common Graves? Who can know who were rich, and who were poor; who had Power and Command, who were Vaſſals, who were remarkable by Fame, who by Infamy?

* As our Divine Poet expreſſes it.

The brags of Life are but a nine days wonder;
And after Death the Funts that ſpring,
From private Bodies make as big a Thunder,
As thoſe that riſe from a huge King.
Herbert.

famy? *They ſhall not ſay this is Jezebel:* not know this was the Daughter and Wife of a King. The King of *Babylon*, ſtiled *Lucifer* the bright Star of the Morning, that poſſeſs'd the firſt Empire in the World, was degraded by *Death*, humbled to the Grave, and exchanged all his glorious State for Worms and Putrefaction. *The Worm is ſpread under thee, and the Worms cover thee.* In ſhort, *Death* ſeparates Men from all their admired charming Vanities. Now conſidering Man merely in the Order of Nature, what Reflection is more fearful and tormenting, than the neceſſity, that cannot be over-ruled, of parting for ever with all the Delights of Life? Thoſe who have aſcended to the Throne, that are arrived at the height of Temporal Happineſs, what a melancholy Proſpect is before them of Death and the dark Grave? When all things conſpire to make Men happy here, the ſenſitive Faculties and their Fruitions are ebbing and declining, till then ſink into Death, the Whirlpool that will ſhortly ſwallow them up for ever. This renders the Thoughts of Mortality ſo frightful, and checks the freeſt enjoyments of carnal Pleaſures.

2 Kings 9. 37.

Iſa. 14. 11.

2. *Death* is fearful in the apprehenſion of Conſcience, as 'tis the moſt ſenſible mark of God's Wrath, that is heavier than Death, and a Summons to give an account of all Things done in this Life, to the righteous Judg of the World. *'Tis appointed to all Men once to die, and afterward the Judgment.* The Penal Fear is more wounding to the Spirit than the Natural. When the awakened Sinner preſently expects the Citation to appear before the Tribunal above, where no Excuſes, no Supplications, no Priviledges avail, where the Cauſe of eternal Life or Death muſt be decided, and the awards of Juſtice be immediately executed; O the Convulſions and Agonies of Conſcience in that hour! when the diſeaſed Body cannot live, and the diſconſolate Soul dare not die, what Anxieties ſurround it? This redoubles the Terrors of Death, that the firſt tranſmits to the ſecond that was figured by it. O the diſmal aſpect of *Death riding on a pale Horſe, with Hell the black Attendant following. This Fear ſurprized the Sinners in* Sion. *Who among us can dwell with devouring Fire? who among us can remain with everlaſting burnings?* This made a Heathen, the

Heb. 9. 27.

Go-

Governor of a Province, to tremble before a poor Priſoner: *While* Paul *diſcourſed of Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgment to come,* Felix *trembled.* Acts 24. 25. *'Tis a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God, who lives for ever, and can puniſh for ever.* Heb. 10. 31. None is ſo powerful as God, nothing ſo fearful as the guilty Conſcience.

3. The Degrees of this Fear are expreſs'd by Bondage. This Paſſion when regular in its Object and Degree, is excellently uſeful: 'tis a wiſe Counſellor and faithful Guardian, that plucks off the Mask from our Enemies, and keeps Reaſon vigilant and active to prevent a threatning Evil, or to ſuſtain it in the beſt manner. 'Tis obſervable in the brute Creatures, that the Weak and Fearful are moſt ſubtile and ingenious to ſecure themſelves, and ſupply the want of Strength with Artifice. But when Fear is inordinate, 'tis a tyrannous Maſter, that vexes the weary Soul, and hinders its free and noble Operations. *Ceſar* choſe rather to be expos'd to ſudden death, than to be continually harraſs'd with fears how to avoid it. Præſtat ſemel mori quam ſemper timere. The Greek word implies the binding of the Spirit, that cauſes an Δεὸς from δέω

in-

inward Slavery. And in the Apoſtle's Writings, ‖ *the Spirit of Fear, and the Spirit of Bondage*, are equivalent. *Iſhboſheth*, when *Abner* provok'd by the Charge about *Saul's* Concubine, imperiouſly threatned to tranſlate the Kingdom to *David*, was ſtruck *with ſuch a fear, that he could not anſwer* Abner *a word*, 2 Sam. 3. 10, 11. The ſudden Paſſion ſtifled his Reply, and reduc'd him to a defenceleſs Silence. Now the fear of Death, as 'tis remiſs or vehement, ſuch are the degrees of Bondage from it.

‖ Πνεῦμα δουλείας. Rom. 8. 15. πνεῦμα δειλίας. 2 Tim. 1. 7.

1. It embitters the enjoyments of the preſent Life, and makes the moſt proſperous in the World, *even in the fulneſs of their ſufficiency, to be in ſtraits.* Though the Senſes are pleaſed with the quick ſweetneſs of Change from one Object to another, yet the Soul cannot have a delightful undiſturbed Fruition, foreſeeing that the ſtream of Pleaſure will iſſue into the dead Sea. *Truly Light is ſweet, and 'tis a pleaſant thing to behold the Sun.* But how ſhort is this Life with all its Pleaſures, in compariſon of *the Days of Darkneſs* that follow. Now though 'tis our beſt Wiſdom and trueſt Liberty, to rejoice *in*

Eccleſ. 11. 7.

this

this World as if we rejoiced not, and frequently to meditate on the cooling Doctrines of *Death* and *Judgment*, to repreſs the tranſports of the voluptuous Appetite; yet ſince the Comforts of this Life are liberally indulged to us by the Love of God, to be the Motives of our grateful and affectionate Obedience, to ſweeten our paſſage to Heaven, we may with tranquillity of Spirit make a pure and chearful uſe of them in his Service; and 'tis an oppreſſing bondage, when the diſquieting anxious Fears of *Death* hinder our temperate enjoyment of his Favours and Bleſſings.

2. The fear of *Death* oppreſſes the Souls of Men under a miſerable Bondage to the Devil; for his Dominion is maintain'd by the Allurements and Terrors of the World. Though Men do not explicitly acknowledg his Soveraignty, yet by voluntary yielding to his pleaſing Temptations, they are really his Slaves. And the apprehenſion of temporal Evils, eſpecially of Death, dreſs'd up in a frightful repreſentation with its bloody Pomp, is the ſtrongeſt ſnare to the Soul. The Faint-hearted prove falſe-hearted in the time of trial: For the timerous Spirit being wholly Prov. 29.

ly intent how to avoid the incurſion of a preſent Evil, forgets or neglects what is indiſpenſably to be done, and thinks to find an excuſe in the pretended neceſſity. How many have been terrified from their cleareſt Duty and reſolved Conſtancy? To eſcape Death, they have been guilty of the moſt inſufferable Impieties, by renouncing God their Maker and Saviour, and worſhipping the Devils for Deities. Every Age preſents ſad Spectacles of many *that chooſe* Job 36. 21. *Iniquity rather than Affliction*, that relinquiſh their Duty, and by wicked Compliances ſave their Lives and loſe their Souls. Carnal Deſires, and carnal Fears, are the Chains of Hell that retain Men Satan's Captives. But what folly, what madneſs is it, for the avoiding the impotent fury of the Creature, to venture on the powerful Wrath of God, that exceeds all the Terrors that can be conceived by *Fear*? This renders them more brutiſh than the Horſe, that ſtarting at his Shadow, ſprings over a deſperate Precipice. *The Fearful are* Rev. 21. *excluded from Heaven, and caſt into the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone for ever.*

3. The extream fear of *Death* and *Judgment*, dejects and diſcourages the Soul

Soul from the uſe of means to prevent eternal Miſery, and induces a moſt woful Bondage. Fear anticipates and exaſperates future Evils: for as Knowledg excites Fear, ſo Fear encreaſes Knowledg, by the unceſſant working of the Thoughts upon terrible Objects. The fearful Mind aggravates the foreſeen Evil, and diſtils the Poiſon from all the Circumſtances and Conſequences of it. And when the Evil is apprehended as inſuperable and indeclinable, all endeavours to eſcape are cut off. What a Philoſopher obſerves of an Earthquake, compared with other deſtructive Evils, is true in this caſe. There may be a ſafe retreat from Fire, from Inundations, from Storms, from War, from Peſtilence, but an Earthquake aſtoniſhes with ſo violent a perturbation, that ſtops our flight from the imminent Danger: So the vehement impreſſions of Fear from the approaches of Death, and the ſevere executions upon the Sinner after it, diſtracts the Mind, and diſables from *flying from the Wrath to come*. Theſe Fears are more heavy by the ſuggeſtions of Satan, who repreſents God ſo terrible in his Majeſty, inexorable in his Juſtice, and unchangeable

Nullum malum ſine effugio. *Senec.*

Timor fugam perdidit.

able in his Threatnings, that all Hopes of obtaining his Favour are loſt. As the *Egyptian Darkneſs* was not meerly from the abſence of the Sun, but from feculent Vapours condenſing the Air, that it might be felt: So theſe dark and fearful expectations of the Divine Wrath are not only from the withdrawing the Light of God's Countenance, but from the Prince of Darkneſs that foul Spirit. And as we read of the *Egyptians*, that *no Man aroſe from his place for three days*; as if they had been buried in that Darkneſs, and deprived of all active Power and Motion: ſo the deſpairing Soul ſits down mourning at the Gates of Death, totally diſabled from proſecuting the Things *that belong to its Peace.* 'Tis Hope inſpires and warms us with alacrity, encourages our Endeavours: Deſpair blunts our edg and induſtry. The Soul ſuffers the hardeſt Bondage, and the Condition is unexpreſſibly ſad under the tyranny of this Fear. O how enthralled, how deſolately miſerable! Deſpair does meritoriouſly and effectually ruin the Soul. For whereas there is no Attribute more Divine, no clearer Notion of the Deity than Love and Mercy; this Paſſion diſparages his Mercy,

cy, as if Sin were more omnipotent, than his Power to pardon; and all the Tears that flow from it, are ſo far from expiating, that they encreaſe Guilt: and whereas the believing view of Chriſt would as compleatly and preſently recover the Soul-wounded Sinner, as the *Iſraelites* were by looking to the ordained viſible Sign of their Salvation; Deſpair turns away the Eye from our Deliverer, and fixes it upon Miſery as remedileſs and final.

4. How comes it to paſs that Men are not always under the actual fear of Death, but ſubject to the revolutions of it all their Lives?

The Seeds of this Fear are hid in the guilty Breaſts of Men, and at times, eſpecially in their Calamities, break forth and kindle upon them. In their Leiſure and Retirement, intercurrent thoughts of *Death* and *Judgment* ſting them by fits, and make them uneaſy. The flaſhes of Conſcience, like moments of Lightning, ſtartle them, but they relapſe into their habitual ſtupidity. And the account of it will be clear, by conſidering the following Particulars.

1. Men are apt to flatter themſelves with the hopes of long Life, and look upon

upon Death at a great diſtance. Tho there be a dying diſpoſition in the youngeſt and ſtrongeſt Perſons, though we live in a World of Caſualties, and Death lie in ambuſh to ſurprize us every day, yet we are ſecure: becauſe Evils affect us according to their apprehended nearneſs. A petty Conſtable that is troubleſom and vexatious, is more fear'd by his Neighbours, than the Grand Signior with all his Executioners. As remote Objects, though of vaſt bigneſs, are leſſen'd to our ſight; ſo through the ſuppoſed interval of many years, Death is look'd on with a diminution of its Terror. But when Death preſents it ſelf before Men ready to diſpatch them, how formidable is its appearance! *Saul* though renowned for his Valour, yet when he underſtood by Revelation, that to morrow he and his Sons ſhould be in the ſtate of the Dead, *there was no ſtrength in him, but he fell ſtraitway all along on the Earth*; ſtruck through with fear before he was wounded by the Arrows of the *Philiſtines*. *Belſhazzar* in the midſt of his luxury and jolity, attended with a *thouſand Lords*, and his *Herd of Concubines*, inflam'd with Wine, and therefore leſs capa-

1 Sam. 28.

Dan. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4.

capable of fear, yet upon the ſight of the fatal Hand writing on the Wall a few unknown Characters, which his guilty Conſcience (before the Prophet *Daniel* came) interpreted to be the Sentence of preſent Death, how fearfully was his Countenance changed pale as a Carcaſs? How ſuddenly did his Blood congeal, and his warmeſt quickeſt Spirits die in his Heart? His whole Body was ſeized by ſuch a vehement trembling, that his Joints were looſed, and his knees ſmote one againſt another. This is a repreſentation of thoſe who bid defiance to Death at a diſtance; but when the fatal Hour is come, and they hear the Sentence decreed againſt them, *God has numbred thy days, and finiſh'd them: thou art weighed in the ballance,* (all thy Words and Actions, thy Thoughts and Affections) *and art found wanting:* and thy Soul ſhall *be divided* from thy Body, the one ſent to Hell to ſuffer the undying Worm of Conſcience, the other to the Grave, to be a Prey to the Worms of Corruption; how are they overcome with horror!

2. The continual ſucceſſion of the Pleaſures and Buſineſs of the World divert the Mind from the attentive ſtrong

contemplation of Death, and the Conſequences of it. Penſive Thoughts are unwelcome, and we ſtudiouſly endeavour to cancel the memory of ſuch things as afflict us. 'Tis ſaid of the Wicked, that *God is not in all their Thoughts.* The conſideration of the holy Inſpector and Judg of their Actions is tormenting, therefore they fill their Minds with earthly Imaginations, to exclude the Divine Preſence. We
Amos 6. 3, 4. read of thoſe, who to *put far away the evil Day, chaunted to the ſound of the Viol, and drank Wine in Bowls.* They are rock'd aſleep with the motion of phantaſtick Vanities. And Sleep takes away Fear, but gives no ſafety. 'Tis
Ælian. recorded of *Marius*, that after his Overthrow by *Sylla*, he was always in conſternation, as if he heard the ſound of the Trumpets, and the noiſe of the victorious Army purſuing him: And his Fears were no longer quiet than whilſt charm'd with Wine and Sleep: he therefore was continually drunk, that he might forget himſelf, his Enemy, and his Danger. Thus Men make a pitiful ſhift to forget their latter End: and whilſt they are following either ſecular Affairs, or ſenſual Pleaſures, are uncon-

unconcerned for what is to be hereafter. But this Diverſion will ſhortly be at an end, for in their languiſhing hours, when the waſted Body fails the carnal Mind, and ſenſual Deſires fail the Man, then Conſcience that ſpoke with a low Voice before, is loud and terrible, and like the rigid Exactor in the Parable, that took his Debtor by the throat, requires them to pay what they owe.

3. Some are ſo hardned in Infidelity, that the Powers of the World to come make no Impreſſion on their Hearts. They mind but little, and are leſs affected with inviſible things. They fortify themſelves with groſs Thoughts, that the Spirit of Man vaniſhes with his Breath, that Death is the end of this Life, and not the beginning of another, *and feed without Fear.* Place one in the midſt of deſtructive Evils, but unſeen or not believed, and he is as fearleſs as a blind Perſon walking on the brink of a deep Pit. Indeed there are none leſs diſturbed with the Terrors of Death, than the eminently Good, or the extremely Bad: for the one ſort have a *bleſſed Hope* that Death will be to them an entrance into Life, and live like the Angels, *with a Joy unſpeakable*

and glorious. The others are as ſenſual and ſecure as the Beaſts that periſh, having extinguiſh'd the fear of eternal future Evils, which is the proper paſſion of Reaſon. The Apoſtle declares, *That knowing the Terror of the Lord, we perſwade Men to be reconcil'd to him, before the Seaſon of Mercy be expired.* But thoſe who have ſuppreſs'd the natural Notions of Eternal Judgment, as they think it beneath their Wiſdom to be perſwaded by the Promiſes of Heaven, ſo beneath their Courage to be terrified with the Threatnings of Hell, and triumph over the Ruines of Conſcience. But though wicked Infidels ſlight the Threatnings, they ſhall not eſcape the Vengeance of God.

2 Cor. 5. 11.

Heb. 11.

We read of *Noah, That being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, he prepared an Ark for the ſaving of his Houſe.* His Fear was the native iſſue of his Faith. But the profane World, in whom Senſe was predominant, that deſpiſed the Oracle, and trembled at no Judgments but what were acting on the viſible Stage, *they ate and drank, married, and were given in marriage,* till ſwept away by the unfeared Inundation. We read that *Lot* being

being certified by an embaſſy of Angels, that a Deluge of Fire would in a few hours pour down from Heaven upon *Sodom*, he moſt earneſtly ſollicited his Sons-in-Law, *Ariſe, depart out of this Place, for the Lord will deſtroy this City:* but they entertained his compaſſionate Advice with deriſion, *he ſeemed to them as one that mocked*, and were ſurpriſed by thoſe fearful Flames that diſpatch'd them from a Temporal Hell to that which is Eternal. Thus 'twas propheſied, *That in the laſt days there ſhall come Scoffers, walking after their own Luſts, and ſaying, Where is the Promiſe of his coming?* But let them blaſpheme and ſcorn the moſt ſacred and terrible Truths, let them perpetuate their *exceſs of Riot*, and wild Mirth while they live, Death will come, and Judgment as ſure as Death.

III. I now come to ſhew how the Death of Chriſt frees us from the tormenting fear of Death.

For the clearing this, we are to conſider, that Sin, Satan and Death, are Enemies in combination againſt Man in his mortal State; and the deſtructive Power of Satan, and Death, is from

Sin. When Man renounced his Creator and natural Lord, he was judicially given up to Satan as the Executioner of Vengeance, and to the Power of Death. Such is the Order, rather the Confuſion in the World by Sin. The Empire of Satan and Death is built on the Ruins of our Innocence.

Now the Son of God came from his Throne in Heaven to deliver us: And whereas there are two ways of obtaining freedom from Captivity, either by Ranſom, or by Power and Reſcue, in both reſpects our deliverance from Bondage to theſe Capital Enemies, is aſcribed to the Death of Chriſt.

'Tis called our Ranſom, and that in its ſtrict Notion has a reſpect to Captivity. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Chriſt Jeſus; who gave himſelf a Ranſom for all.* His Life was the full price of our Liberty and Salvation. God does not pardon Sin, and releaſe from Puniſhment by a pure abſolute Act of his Will and Authority, as a Creditor forgives a Debtor; but in ſuch a way as to preſerve the Rights of Juſtice inviolate. Therefore when Man was devoted to Death, our Redeemer exchang'd Conditions

1 Tim. 2. 6.

ditions with him, and offer'd *up his precious Blood*, as our Ranſom to God, in the quality of the King and Judg of all. Such was the Dignity of his Perſon, that the entire World, the Heavens and the Earth, with all their Inhabitants, are of leſs value to him, than the baſeſt Droſs to refined Gold. Such was the greatneſs of his Sufferings, in which the higheſt degree of Obedience, and the loweſt degree of Humility were conſpicuous, as to be a valuable Compenſation, to obtain *eternal Redemp[tion] for us.* 1 Pet. 1. p.

Now when God the ſupreme Jud[ge] ſatisfied, Satan forfeits the right he [had] to torment us, and is divested of [his] Dominion over our Wills; which tho juſtly permitted, was an uſurpation upon God's Right in Man that can never be extinguiſh'd. 'Tis ſaid by the Apoſtle, that our Saviour *blotting out the hand-writing of Ordinances that was againſt us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his Croſs:* He aboliſh'd the uſe of the Ceremonial Law, that was an Evidence and Enditement of their Guilt who performed it, and the Curſe of the Moral Law: It follows, *and having ſpoil-* c.

ed Principalities and Powers, he made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Our Saviour died victoriouſly; the Tree of Infamy on which he ſuffered, was the Trophy of his Conqueſt. His Death diſarm'd Satan of his Weapons, whereby he ſubdued Us, *Sin*, the *Law*, and *Death*; for though his actual Triumph was in his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion to Glory, yet it is juſtly aſcribed to his Death; for that meritoriouſly open'd the Grave at his Reſurrection, and Heaven at his Aſcenſion.

And here by the way 'tis moſt worthy of obſervation, that our Deliverance from our ſpiritual and moſt deadly Enemies is equally righteous, as admirable and glorious: for our ſuffering Saviour appeas'd the Wrath of God, and broke the Powers of Darkneſs. *The Wiſdom and Love of God had their Deſigns in his Death, as well as the Malice and Rage of Satan; as Lines, that are oppoſite in the Circumference, meet in the Centre.*

And as from the Tyranny of Satan, ſo the Death of our Redeemer is our redemption from Death, as to the Curſe and final Dominion of it; nay, has made it a bleſſed Advantage to us.

1. The

1. The Curſe is removed. Death conſidered as the Wages of Sin, is all ſting and poiſon, the conſequent of the ſpiritual *Death*, and the introduction to eternal *Death*. *The ſting of Death is Sin, and the ſtrength of Sin is the Law.* Death hath its wounding Power from Sin, and Sin from the Law, that forbids it, that diſcovers its Nature, and enhanſes the meaſure of its Guilt, and denounces condemnation for it. Now our Saviour having in our ſtead, ſubjected himſelf to Death, the penalty of the Law for Sin, *There is no condemnation to thoſe that are in Chriſt Jeſus. Chriſt hath redeemed us from the Curſe of the Law, being made a Curſe for us.* Death inflicted on the Saints, has not that relation to the guilt of Sin, as to be properly ſatisfaction to revenging Juſtice. There are no petty payments to be made by our Sufferings after his compleat Satisfaction to God. *The Lord laid on him the Iniquities of us all.*

1 Cor. 15.

Gal. 3.

Iſa. 53.

'Tis indeed ſtill a declaration of God's holy Diſpleaſure againſt Sin, for that originally open'd the way of its coming into the World; and ſometimes by the immaturity or manner of it, 'tis a chaſtiſement upon good Men for Sin; that is,

is, to make them renew their Repentance, and mortify their carnal Affections that faſten them to the World. For though after the laſt act of Expiration there is no place for Repentance; yet in the approaches of Death, the Soul is ſtrongly excited by the Call of God to review its State, and make ſolemn preparation to be *found of him in Peace.* But 'tis not in a ſtrict ſenſe the malediction and vengeance of the Law executed upon them. The Serpent is turn'd into a Rod of Correction in the hands of our Heavenly Father for their good. As the Apoſtle, ſpeaking of ſome that for their profaning the Lord's Table, were *fallen aſleep*, adds, *that when we are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the World. A Believer ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond Death.*

Heb. 12.

1 Cor. 10. 33.

Rev. 2.

From hence it is, that in the Book of Life, the Scriptures, the Death of the Saints is called *a Sleep.* Saint *Paul* argues, *If we believed that Jeſus died and roſe again; even ſo them alſo that ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him.* 'Tis obſervable how the Apoſtle varies the expreſſion, *Jeſus died, and the Saints ſleep in him:* for he ſuſtained Death with

1 Theſſ. 4. 14.

with all its Terrors, that it might be a calm Sleep to his People. They enjoy as perfect a Reſt in the Beds of Duſt, as ever in the ſofteſt Down. *Stephen* in the midſt of a ſhower of Stones fell aſleep. Believers die in Peace. *The Righteous is taken from the Evil to come; he enters into Peace.* Being reconciled to God through the Blood of Chriſt, they are not terrified at his Call, but with ſweet tranquillity reſign their Souls unto him. *Lord, now let thy Servant depart in Peace, for mine Eyes have ſeen thy Salvation.* There is a vaſt difference in God's account, between the Death of the Righteous and the Wicked. As the Tabernacle in the Wilderneſs was taken down with care upon their change of ſtation, and delivered to the *Levites* charge, in order to the raiſing of it again with honour; but the Houſe incurably infected with the Leproſy, was pluck'd down with violence, and thrown into an unclean place with execration: Thus *the death of the Saints is precious in the ſight of the Lord*, their Bodies are kept in the boſom of the

Annon longe glorioſius fuit, quandoquidem totam pro nobis agebatur, ut non modo paſſio corporis, ſed etiam cordis affectio pro nobis faceret? Et quos vivificabat mors, nihilominus & trepidatio robuſtos, & mœſtitia lætos & tædium alacres & turbatio quietos faceret, & deſolatio conſolatos? *Bern.* Serm. 1. de S. *Andr.*

Iſa. 57. 1, 2.

Luke 2.

the Earth, to be raiſed in Glory; and the death of the Wicked is accurs'd. In ſhort, as the Wood that *Moſes* caſt into the Waters of *Marah*, by a miraculous virtue ſweetned them: ſo the Croſs of Chriſt has taken away the malignity and bitterneſs of Death.

2. *Death* is a bleſſed Advantage, and *enriching Gain* to a Believer: it brings him to the poſſeſſion of that Good that incomparably exceeds the Evil that remains in it. For the Death of a Saint is not total; but as in the Ceremony of Purification from Leproſy, one Bird was killed, and the other let fly in the open Air, the myſterious ſhadow of the Lepers being reſtored to a ſtate of Liberty: Thus *when the Body dies and returns to the Earth, the Spirit returns to God, the Father of Spirits, and Fountain of Life.* Our Saviour told the Jews, John 6. 48. *I am the living Bread that came down from Heaven: if any Man eat of this Bread, he ſhall live for ever; and the Bread that I will give is my Fleſh, that I will give for the Life of the World.* The Heavenly Divine Life, that is communicated by the Spirit of Chriſt to Believers, remains entire when the ſenſitive Life is loſt. The natural Order is, *There is a time*

time to be born, and a time to die: the ſupernatural is, there is a time to die, and a time to be born. The Death of a Saint is a † new Birth; the pains of the dying Body are as Throws, whereby the ripen'd Soul is delivered into *the Land of the Living.* The happineſs of a Saint after Death, more particularly will appear by conſidering;

† Dies iſte quem tu tanquam ſupremum reformidas, æterni natalis eſt. *Senec.*

1. The freedom he obtains from all afflicting Evils that are numberleſs here, and from Sin the worſt in its nature, and the cauſe of all the reſt. The preſent World is a Labyrinth of Thorns, in every ſtate we meet with ſomething to vex us. You may as well count the Waves of the Sea when inraged by a Tempeſt, as the Troubles to which in this mortal open ſtate we are expos'd. *Man that is born of a Woman, is of few days, and full of Trouble.* A ſhort Life, and many Miſeries. O our unhappy Capacity! the Body is liable to as many Diſeaſes as there are Members; and the Soul to as many Perplexities as Paſſions. How often are the Scenes and Habits chang'd in the time of one Man? He that lives in Pleaſures, muſt act the Mourner's part. *Our ſweeteſt Comforts have hidden Stings:* and whatever is moſt

Job 14. 1.

Tempus anguſtatur ad vitam, dilatatur ad miſeriam.

moſt pleaſing, may occaſion bitter grief. And uſually holy Men have a greater portion of Afflictions here: ſometimes by the malignity and violence of the Wicked; as under the Law, the Lamb and the Dove were Sacrifices, the Emblems of Innocence, and Purity, and Meekneſs, whilſt the Vulture and the Lion, the greedy Devourers, eſcaped. This the Apoſtle declares of the Elect, *They are predeſtinated to be conformed to the Image of God's Son*, who trac'd out the Way to Heaven in his own Blood, and by the Croſs aſcended to the Throne. Sometimes more immediately Divine Providence afflicts them, to preſerve their Spirits from the tainted Pleaſures of the World, and for other holy Ends: but there *is a Reſt for the People of God in Heaven.* Beſides, there are Relicks of Sin in the beſt of the Saints here. Indeed Sin is depos'd from Sovereignty and Rule; the imperious Luſts are crucified, but not quite expir'd. As thoſe that were nail'd to the Croſs in their Hands and Feet, the parts leaſt vital and moſt ſenſible, died a painful lingring Death. *Still the Fleſh luſts againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh.* As there is a complexion of Hu-

Humours in humane Bodies, always jarring when they are in the ſoundeſt Health; and where there is not this active contrariety, either the Body is without a Soul, a meer Carcaſs, or a glorified Body in Heaven. So where there is not this internal Combat between Grace and Sin, either the Man is wholly * carnal, *dead in Sins and Treſpaſſes*; or wholly ſpiritual, reigning in Heaven. And there is nothing more works on the tender Affections of a Saint, than to find in himſelf what is diſpleaſing to God; that ſtill he is under a ſad neceſſity of ſinning. What is ſaid concerning an old Man waſted and decayed in his drooping Years, that *the Graſhopper is a burden to him*, is true of the new Man in a Chriſtian; the Sins that are counted light in the valuation of the World, are a heavy weight to him. Vain Thoughts, idle Words, irregular Paſſions, unprofitable Actions, are motives of heart-breaking Sorrow. Now Death is to a Believer an univerſal Remedy againſt all the Evils of this Life: it frees him from all Injuries and Sufferings,

* Omnes homines aut ſunt penitus caro, & nihil habent ſpiritus, ii ſunt infideles ſine regeneratione. Aut ſunt tantum ſpiritus ſine carne. Ii ſunt ſancti; qui jam in Cœlo æterna fruuntur pace ſine pugna. Aut ſunt partim ſpiritus, partim caro. Ii ſunt omnes renati per Spiritum Sanctum in Chriſto. *Aug. cont. Jul.*

ferings, and from Sin in all its degrees, from all inclinations and temptations to it. *He that is dead, ceaſeth from Sin.* Death is the Paſſage from this Wilderneſs to the true *Canaan* the Reſt above, that flows with better Milk and Hony, with Innocence and Happineſs for ever. There nothing can diſturb the Peace, or corrupt the Purity of the Bleſſed.

3. Beſides the privative advantage, the freedom from all the Effects of God's Diſpleaſure, and the reſentments of it, there is the higheſt poſitive Good obtained by Death; *The Spirits of juſt Men are made perfect in Heaven.* The Soul is the Glory of Man, and Grace is the Glory of the Soul, and both are then in their Exaltation. All the Faculties of the Soul are rais'd to the higheſt degrees of Natural and Divine Perfection. In this Life Grace renews the Faculties, but does not elevate them to their higheſt pitch: it does not make a mean Underſtanding pregnant, nor a frail Memory ſtrong, nor a ſlow Tongue eloquent, but ſanctifies them as they are. But when the Soul is releas'd from this dark Body of Earth, the Underſtanding is clear and quick, the Memory firm, the Will and Affections

ctions ardent and vigorous. And they are enrich'd with Divine Light, and Love, and Power, that makes them fit for the moſt noble and heavenly Operations. The Lineaments of God's Image on the Soul are firſt drawn here, but then it receives his laſt Hand. All the Celeſtial Colours are added, to give the utmoſt life and luſtre to it. Here we are advancing, but by Death we arrive at Perfection.

We ſhall in Heaven be join'd to the Aſſembly of Saints and Angels, our beſt Friends. Love is the Law of that Kingdom, and perfectly obeyed there. Now how charming is the Converſation of one that is wiſe and holy, eſpecially if the ſweetneſs of Affability be in his Temper? How pleaſantly does Time ſlide away in the company of our beloved Friends? We are not ſenſible of its flight. But what dear ſatisfaction is it to be united to that choſen conſecrated Society Above, *who love one another as themſelves?* Though the Angels and Saints have different degrees of Glory, yet every one is perfectly happy and pleaſed. As the ſtrings of an Inſtrument differ in the ſize and ſound; ſome are ſharp and high, ſome

grave and deep, others a mean, and from that variety reſults the Harmony and Muſick, ſo that if every ſtring had Judgment and Election, it would chuſe to be what it is: ſo from the different degrees of Glory in Heaven, the moſt amiable and equal Order of the Divine Wiſdom appears, that ſatisfies every one.

We ſhall be in the glorious Preſence of God and Chriſt, *where is fulneſs of Joy, and infinite Pleaſures for ever.* 'Tis ſaid of *Abraham, he rejoic'd to ſee the Day of Chriſt*, two thouſand Years before his coming. When by Faith he ſaw the Incarnation of the Son of God, in order to the redemption of Men, it put him into an exſtaſy. Yet then our Saviour was born to Sorrows and Miſeries. But how raviſhing is the ſight of our Redeemer, *ſet down on the right Hand of the Majeſty on high, having purged our Sins by himſelf*, and accompliſh'd our Salvation? Now we are *abſent from God*, yet in believing his infallible Promiſes, we *rejoice with a Joy unſpeakable and glorious:* But how much more joyful is the fruition of them? Here the Divine Goodneſs is derived to us through ſecondary means, that weak-

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en its efficacy, but in Heaven the Conſolations of the Creator are moſt purely diſpenſed, and his immediate Excellencies are made known.

This Bleſſedneſs exceeds all our Thoughts and explicite Deſires, and requires the eloquence and experience of an Angel to ſet it forth. The bright Sum of it is this, We ſhall ſee God in his Glory, *face to face*, in the moſt perfect manner: the ſight of his Glory ſhall transform us into his Likeneſs; *we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is*. This ſhall produce in us the moſt pure and ardent Love; and Love ſhall be attended with inexpreſſible joy, and that with the higheſt Praiſes of the bleſſed God, whoſe influxive Preſence is the Heaven of Heaven.

1 Cor. 13.

1 John 3.

And that which crowns all is, that the Life above is Eternal. This ſatisfies all our Deſires, and excludes all our Fears: for Unchangeableneſs is an inſeparable Attribute of perfect Felicity. The Bleſſed are in full Communion with God, *the Fountain of Life, and Chriſt the Prince of Life. Becauſe I live*, ſaith our Saviour, *ye ſhall live alſo*. What can interrupt, much leſs put an end to the Happineſs of the Saints?

The Love of God is immutably fix'd upon them, and their Love upon him. Here their Love is ſubject to decays, and gradual alienations; as the Needle in the Compaſs, though it always has a tendency to the North-Pole, yet ſometimes it declines and has its variations. But in Heaven the Love of the Saints is directly and conſtantly ſet upon God. The *Light of his Countenance* governs all their Affections. 'Tis as impoſſible to divert their Deſires from him, as to cauſe one that is inflam'd with Thirſt, to leave a clear flowing Spring for a noiſom Puddle. In ſhort, Heaven is filled with eternal *Hallelujahs:* for there is no appearance of Sin, no ſhadow of Death there: all Miſeries are vaniſh'd, and all that is deſirable is poſſeſs'd by the Saints: the Circle of their Employment is to enjoy and praiſe the Divine Goodneſs for ever.

Now is not the bleſſed Exchange a Chriſtian makes of the preſent Life, for that which is infinitely better, ſufficient to make Death not fearful, nay deſirable to him? The regular well-grounded hope of this will compoſe the Thoughts in the neareſt Approach and

Appre-

Apprehenſion of Death: No other Principles or Reſolutions are able to vanquiſh the Terrors of our laſt Enemy. And this Happineſs was purchas'd for us by the everlaſting Treaſure of our Saviour's Blood. The Satisfaction of his Sufferings was meritorious, as the Merits of his active Obedience was ſatisfying.

Before I proceed to the third Head, I ſhall reſolve a Queſtion, How it comes to paſs, ſince Believers are freed from the Sting of Death, that they die, and remain in the State of Death for a time.

For this there are ſeveral Reaſons.

1. By this means all the ſinful Frailties that cleave to the Saints in this Life, are aboliſh'd. *The Body is dead becauſe of Sin:* And what is more becoming the wiſe and Holy Providence of God, than that as by Sin Man was at firſt made ſubject to Death, ſo by Death Sin dies entirely for ever. Thus as in *Sampſon*'s Riddle, Out of the Devourer comes Meat; and our worſt Enemy is conquer'd by his own Weapons. Rom. 8.

2. Death is continued to the Saints, for the more eminent Exerciſe and Illuſtration of their Graces, for the Glo-

ry of God, and in order to their future Reward. ‖ Faith, and Love, and Patience, are declared in their moſt powerful Operations in our Encounter with Death. If every Saint were viſibly and entirely tranſlated to Heaven, after a ſhort courſe of Holy Obedience; if the Wicked did viſibly drop down quick into Hell, Faith would be reſigned to Sight here. This would confound the Militant State of the Church with the Triumphant. Therefore now *Death happens to the Good as well as to the Wicked.* In the next State they ſhall be ſeparated *by a vaſt Gulph*, and an amazing Difference. Now Faith, whatever the kind of Death be that a Chriſtian ſuffers, ſees through the thickeſt Clouds of Diſgrace and Miſery, the glorious Iſſue. As the illuſtrious Confeſſor who was crucified with our Saviour, proclaim'd his Eternal Kingdom in the midſt of inſulting Infidels. And our Love to God then appears in its Radiancy and Vigour, when we are ready for the Teſtimony of his Truth, and advancing his Glo-

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‖ Poterat autem Chriſtus etiam hoc donare credentibus, ut nec iſtius experirentur corporis mortem: ſed ſi hoc feciſſet carni quædam fœlicitas adderetur, minueretur fidei fortitudo. Quid enim magnum erat vivendo eos non mori qui crederent ſe non morituros? Quanto eſt majus quanto fortius quanto laudabiliùs ita credere, ut ſe ſperet moriturus ſine fine victurum? *Aug.* de pecc. Mort. *Lib.* 3.

ry, to ſuffer a violent Death: or when it comes in a gentler manner, for 'tis even then terrible to Nature, we are willingly ſubject to Diſſolution, that we may be united to God in Heaven. And our Patience has never its *perfect Work*, and is truly victorious, till this laſt Enemy be ſubdued. *Death* is the *Seal* of our *Conſtancy* and *Perſeverance*. Now the righteous Rewarder will crown none but thoſe *that ſtrive lawfully*, and are compleat Conquerors. And how wiſe and ſweet is the Oeconomy of the Divine Providence in this, that the Frailty of our Nature ſhould afford us a means of glorifying God, and of entitling our ſelves by his moſt gracious Promiſes to a bleſſed Reward?

Exercitia nobis ſunt non funera, dant animo fortitudinis gloriam: Contemptu mortis præparant ad coronam. *Cypr.* de Mortal.

3. Our Saviour by his unvaluable Obedience and Sufferings, has procur'd for Believers a Celeſtial Divine Life, of which the natural Body is not capable. The Apoſtle ſaith, *Fleſh and Blood cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. The exigencies and decays of the ſenſitive Nature require a continual Relief by Food and Sleep, and other material Supplies: but the Life above is wholly ſpiritual, and equal to that of the An-

gels. Therefore till this earthly Animal Body be reformed and purified, 'tis not capable of the Glory reſerv'd in Heaven. This is ſo abſolutely requiſite, that thoſe Believers, who are found alive at the laſt Day, ſhall *in the twinkling of an Eye be changed*, that they may be qualified for it. Now herein the Wiſdom of God is wonderful, that Death which by the Covenant of Works was the deſerved Penalty of Sin, by the Covenant of Grace ſhould be the Inſtrument of Immortality. That as *Joſeph* by a ſurpriſing Circuit was brought from the Priſon to the Principality; ſo a Believer by the Grave aſcends to Heaven. This the Apoſtle in his Divine Diſputation againſt Infidels, proves in a moſt convincing manner; *Thou Fool, that which thou ſoweſt, is not quickned except it die.* As the rotting of the Corn in the Earth is neceſſary to the reviving and ſpringing of it up: ſo we muſt die, and the Image of the Earthly *Adam* be aboliſh'd, that we may be transformed into the Image of the Heavenly One.

And to the other part of the Queſtion, Why the Saints remain in the ſtate of Death for a time? there is a clear Anſwer.

Anſwer. The Reſurrection of the Saints is delayed till Chriſt's coming to Judgment, partly for the Glory of his Appearance: For what an admirable Sight will it be, that the Saints of all Ages ſhall at once ariſe glorified and immortalized to attend upon our Saviour in the laſt Act of his Regal Office, and then to make a triumphant Entry with him into Heaven: And partly, that the eſtabliſh'd order of Providence may not be diſturbed: for the changing of our Nature into Glory, in a ſuddain and inexplicable manner, cannot be without miraculous Power; and if every Believer preſently after Death, were in his glorified Body tranſlated to Heaven, the World would be always filled with Miracles, which were to ceaſe after the ſufficient Confirmation of the Goſpel by them. But how long ſoever the Interval be to the Reſurrection, it ſhall be with *them that ſleep in Jeſus*, as 'tis with thoſe that awake out of a quiet natural Sleep, to whom the longeſt Night ſeems but as a Moment: ſo when the Saints firſt awake from Death, in the great Morning of the World, a thouſand Years will ſeem no more to them than to God himſelf, *but as one day.*

I now come to prove the third thing, That our Saviour will aboliſh the Dominion of Death over the Saints.

Whilſt the Bodies of the Saints remain in the Grave, they ſeem to be abſolutely under the Power of Death. The World is a *Golgotha*, fill'd with the Monuments of its Victories. And it may be ſaid to this our laſt Enemy, in the Words of the Prophet to the bloody King, *Haſt thou killed, and taken Poſſeſſion?* But we are aſſur'd by an infallible Word, that the Power of Death ſhall be aboliſh'd, and the Bodies of the Saints be reviv'd incorruptible and immortal.

The Reſurrection is a *Terra incognita* to the wiſeſt Heathens; a Doctrine peculiar to the Goſpel: ſome Glimmerings they had of the Soul's Immortality, without which all Vertue had been extinguiſh'd in the World, but no conjecture of the reviving of the Body. But Reaſon aſſiſts Faith in this point, both as to the Will of God, and his Power for the performing it. I will glance upon the natural Reaſons that induce the conſidering Mind to receive this Doctrine, and more largely ſhew how *the Reſurrection of the Juſt*

Juſt is aſſured by our Redeemer.

1. The Divine Laws are the Rule of Duty to the entire Man, and not to the Soul only: and they are obeyed or violated by the Soul and Body in Conjunction. Therefore there muſt be a Reſurrection of the Body, that the entire Perſon may be capable of Recompences in Judgment. The Soul deſigns, the Body executes: the Senſes are the open Ports to admit Temptations. Carnal Affections deprave the Soul, corrupt the Mind, and miſlead it. The Love of Sin is founded *in bono jucundo*, in ſenſible Pleaſures: *and the Members are the Servants of Iniquity.* The Heart is the Fountain of Prophaneneſs, and the Tongue expreſſes it. And the Body is obſequious to the Holy Soul in doing or ſuffering for God; and denies its ſenſual Appetites and Satisfactions in Compliance with Reaſon and Grace. The *Members are the Inſtruments of Righteouſneſs.* It follows then there will be an univerſal Reſurrection, that the rewarding Goodneſs of God may appear in making the Bodies of his Servants glorioufly happy with their Souls, and their Souls compleatly happy in Union with their Bodies,

dies, to which they have a natural Inclination, and his revenging Juſtice be manifeſt in puniſhing the Bodies of the Wicked with eternal Torments anſwerable to their Guilt.

And of the Poſſibility of the Reſurrection, the circular and continual Production of things in the World, is a clear Demonſtration of the Power of God for that effect. There is a pregnant Inſtance that our Saviour and the Apoſtle made uſe of as an Image of the Reſurrection: A Grain of Corn ſowed in the Earth, corrupts and dies, and after ſprings up entire: its Death is a diſpoſition to Life. The Eſſays of God's Power in the Works of returning Nature, Flowers and Fruits in their ſeaſon, inſtruct us how eaſily he can make thoſe that are in the Duſt to awake to Life. If the Art of Man, whoſe Power and Skill are very narrow and limited, can refine Gold and Silver to ſuch a Luſter, as if their matter were not * Earth digged out of the Mines: If from black Cinders it can form Chryſtal Glaſſes ſo clear and ſhining, how much more can Omnipotency recompact our Duſt, and reanimate it with a glorious Life? Death that

* Nomen terræ in igni reliquit. *Tirtul.*

that diſſolves our vital Frame, does not aboliſh the matter of our Bodies: and though 'tis corrupted and changed by a thouſand accidents, yet 'tis unperiſhing; and under whatſoever Colours and Figures it appears, God perfectly diſcerns, and will ſeparate it for its proper uſe.

More particularly, I will ſhew how the Reſurrection of Chriſt is an aſſurance of the Reſurrection of Believers to Glory. As our Surety he was under the arreſt of Death; it becoming the holy Majeſty of God, and conducing to the ends of his Government, not to derogate from the dignity of his Law, but to lay the penalty upon his Son, who interpoſed for us. Now having finiſh'd the Work of our Redemption by his Sufferings, his Reſurrection was the juſt conſequent of his Paſſion. And 'tis obſervable that his Reſurrection, tho one entire Act, is aſcribed as to himſelf, Rom. 1. 11. ſo to his Father, by whoſe conſent and concurrence he roſe again. Therefore 'tis ſaid, *Whom God raiſed up, having looſed the Pains of Death, ſince it was impoſſible he ſhould be holden by it.* Acts 2. 24. 'Twas naturally impoſſible upon the account of the Divine Power inherent in his Per-

Perſon, and legally impoſſible; becauſe Divine Juſtice required that he ſhould be raiſed to Life; partly to vindicate his Innocence, for he was reputed, and ſuffered as a Malefactor, and principally becauſe he had fully ſatisfied God. Accordingly the Apoſtle declares, *he died for our Sins, and roſe again for our Juſtification.* Having paid our Debt, he was releas'd from the Grave, and the Diſcharge was moſt ſolemnly publiſh'd to the World. 'Tis therefore ſaid, *the God of Peace raiſed him from the Dead:* the Act is moſt congruouſly aſcribed unto God, inveſted with that Title, becauſe his Power was exerted in that glorious Work, after he was *reconciled by the Blood of the Covenant.* Briefly, Our Saviour's Victory over Death was obtained by dying, his Triumph by riſing again. He foil'd our common Enemy in his own Territories the Grave. His Death was a Counterpoiſon to Death it ſelf: as a bruiſed Scorpion is a * noble Antidote againſt its Venom.

Rom. 4.

Heb. 13.

* Qui ſibi ipſe pulcherrimum medicamentum. *Celſus.*

Indeed his Death is incomparably a greater Wonder than his Reſurrection. For 'tis apparently more difficult that the Son of God, who originally poſſeſſes

ſes Immortality, ſhould die, than that the humane Body united to him, ſhould be raiſed to a glorious Life. It is more conceivable that God ſhould communicate to the humane Nature ſome of his Divine Perfections, Impaſſibility, and Immortality, than that he ſhould ſubmit to our loweſt Infirmities, Sufferings, and Death.

Now the Reſurrection of Chriſt is the argument and claim of our happy Reſurrection. For God choſe and appointed him to be the Example and Principle from whom all Divine Bleſſings ſhould be derived to us. Accordingly he tells his Diſciples in a fore-cited Scripture, *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.* Our Nature was rais'd in his Perſon, and in our Nature all Believers: Therefore he is called *the firſt-fruits of them that ſleep*; becauſe as the firſt Fruits were a pledg and aſſurance of the following Harveſt; and as from the condition of the firſt Fruits being offered to God, the whole Harveſt was entitled to a Conſecration; ſo our Saviour's Reſurrection to the Life of Glory is the earneſt and aſſurance of ours. He is called *the firſt-born among the Dead*, and owns the Race of departed Believers

vers as his Brethren, who ſhall be reſtored to Life according to his Pattern. He is *the Head*, Believers *are his Members*, and therefore ſhall have Communion with him in his Life. The effect is ſo infallible, that now they are ſaid
Epheſ. 2. 6. *to be raiſed up together, and made to ſit in heavenly Places in Chriſt Jeſus.* If his Victory over our Enemies had been imperfect, and he had ſaved himſelf with difficulty and hazard, [*as it were by Fire*] in the Apoſtle's expreſſion, our Redemption had not been accompliſh'd: But his Paſſion was triumphant; and is it conceivable, that he ſhould leave the Saints, his own by ſo many dear titles, under the power of Death? If *Moſes*, the Deliverer of *Iſrael* from the Tyran-
Exod. 10. 26. ny of *Pharaoh*, would not ſuffer any thing of theirs, *not an hoof* to remain in the Houſe of Bondage; Will our great Redeemer be leſs perfect in his Work? Shall our laſt Enemy always detain his Spoils, our Bodies, in the Grave? This would reflect upon his Love and Power. 'Tis recorded, to confirm our Hopes, how early his Power was diſplayed in forcing the Grave to releaſe its chained Captives: *And*
Mat. 27. 52, 53. *many Bodies of Saints which ſlept aroſe, and*

and came out of the Graves after his Reſurrection, and went into the holy City, and appeared unto many. What better Earneſt can we have, that the ſtrength of Death is broken? From what he has done to what he is able to do, the Conſequence is clear. The Apoſtle tells us, *He will raiſe our vile Bodies, and change them like unto his glorious Body, by that Power whereby he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf.* Our Redemption *will then be compleat*, and all the bitterneſs of Death paſt. The Redemption of the Soul is accompliſh'd from Sin and Miſery immediately after Death: but the Redemption of the Body is the laſt in order, and reſerved to crown our Felicity at the Great Day. Then *Death ſhall be ſwallowed up in Victory*, aboliſh'd for ever.

Phil. 3. 1.

Rom. 8. 23.

1 Cor. 15.

And O the joyful reunion of thoſe dear Relatives after ſuch a Divorce! when the Body that was ſo long detained in the loathſome Grave, ſhall be reformed with all glorious Perfections, and be a fit Inſtrument for the Soul, and partaker with it in conſummate Bleſſedneſs and Immortality. 'Tis ſaid, that *thoſe that wear rich Clothing are in Kings Houſes:* but what are all the

1 Cor. 15.

Robes of coſtly Folly wherein earthly Courtiers appear, to the Brightneſs and Beauty of the Spiritual Body wherewith the Saints ſhall be clothed, to qualify them for the Preſence of the King of Kings, and to be in his Houſe for ever? But O the miſerable Condition of the Wicked in that Day! Death now breaks their Bodies and Souls into an irreconcileable Enmity, and how ſad will their Conjunction be! The Soul will accuſe the Body to have been Sin's Solicitor, continually tempting to Senſualities: and the Body will upbraid more than ever it allured the Soul, for its wicked Compliance: Then the Sinner ſhall be an entire Sacrifice burning, but never conſumed. Now from the aſſurance of a bleſſed Reſurrection by Chriſt, the forementioned Fear of Death is conquered in Believers. If the Doctrine of the † Tranſmigration of Souls into Bodies (the invention of *Pythagoras*) inſpired his Diſciples with that fiery vigour, as to encounter the moſt preſent and apparent Dangers, being fearleſs to part with the Life that ſhould be reſtored; how much more ſhould

Mark 9.

† Fœlices errore ſuo quos ille timorum
Maximus, haud urget leti metus, inde ruendi
In ferrrum mens prona viris, animæq; capaces
Mortis, & ignavum redituræ parcere vitæ.
Lucan.

ſhould a Chriſtian with a holy Confidence receive Death, knowing that the Life of his Body ſhall not be finally loſt, but renewed in a bleſſed Eternity?

The fourth General to be conſidered is, the Perſons that have an Intereſt in this bleſſed *Priviledg*.

This Inquiry is of infinite moment, both for the awakning of the Secure, who vainly preſume upon their Intereſt in the Salvation of the Goſpel, and for the confirming and encouraging the Saints. And we have an infallible rule of trial declared by St. *John*; *He that hath the Son, hath Life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not Life.* 1 John 5. 12. All the excellent and comfortable Benefits procur'd by our Saviour are communicated only to thoſe who are united to him. Particularly with reſpect to the preſent Subject: Juſtification, that great Bleſſing of the Goſpel, the compleat Pardon of Sins, that diſarms Death of its Sting, is not common to all that are Chriſtians in title, but is a Priviledg with a limitation; *There is no Condemnation to thoſe that are in Chriſt Jeſus,* Rom. 8. 1. vitally as their Head, from whom are derived ſpiritual Influences, and judici-

ally as their Advocate in Judgment; and ſuch are deſcribed by this infallible Character, *who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.* The Bleſſedneſs after Death that is aſſured by a Voice from Heaven, is with this preciſe reſtriction, excluſive of all others: *Bleſſed are the Dead that die in the Lord;* Revel. *they reſt from their Labours, and their Works follow them.* The glorious Reſurrection at the laſt Day, when the Bodies of the Saints that now reſt in Hope, ſhall be incorruptible and immortal, is the conſequence of Union with him. Thus the Apoſtle declares; 1 Cor. 15. 22. *As in Adam all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.* As all that were naturally in and from *Adam*, the corrupt Fountain of Mankind, are under the ſentence of Death; ſo all that are in *Chriſt* the Head of the Regenerate, ſhall partake of his bleſſed Life. Others ſhall be raiſed by his Power, as their Judg, but not as their Head: rais'd to be more miſerable than Death can make them, not be transform'd into his glorious Reſemblance; made capable of ſuffering an ever-dying Death, not revived to eternal Life.

Now

Now the Bond of our Union to Chriſt, is the Holy Spirit derived from him, as the Head of the Church, and is the inward, powerful and laſting Principle of Holineſs, and new Obedience in Believers. *He that is joined to* 1 Cor. 6. 17. *the Lord, is one Spirit:* that is, by the Spirit of Holineſs has a real Participation of his Life, is both *quickned and* John 6. 36. *united to him.* When the Prophet *Eliſha* by the outward applying the parts 2 Kings 4. 34. of his Body to the dead Child, inſpir'd Life into him, there was no real Union between them: but Chriſt is by his Spirit ſo intimately united to Believers, *that he lives in them*, and *they in* Gal. 2. 20. *him.* The ſanctifying Spirit renews the directing and commanding Faculties, the Fountains of moral Actions; enlightens the Underſtanding with ſaving Knowledg, rectifies the Obliquity of the Will, purifies the Affections, and reforms the Life; ſo that *the ſame Mind* is in Chriſtians *as was in Chriſt*; and as *his Converſation was*, ſuch *is theirs in the World.* This Divine Change is not wrought by natural Reaſon, though aſſiſted by the moſt powerful Arguments. The Breath of a Man may as eaſily diſpel a Miſt, or

thaw a Froſt, as humane Directions and Motives to Vertue can renew the Mind and Heart, and produce a Holy frame of Soul towards God. Renewed Chriſtians are ſaid to *be in the Spirit*, illuminated, inclin'd and enabled by the Spirit to do God's Will; and the Spirit of God to dwell in them, by his peculiar and eminent Operations. *They live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit.* An Angel may aſſume a Body, and act by it: but the humane Soul enlivens it, and performs ſenſible Operations by it. And ſuch a Principle is the Holy Spirit to the Soul, gives it ſpiritual Life, Activity and Power for good Works. By what Application of the Spirit's Power this is produc'd is myſterious and inexplicable: but as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of his Rapture into the third Heavens, that he knew it was real, and heard *unutterable things*; though how it was performed, *whether in the Body, or out of the Body*, he could not tell: thus when a natural Man, the current of whoſe Thoughts and Affections, was to the things of this World, becomes ſpiritual, when the carnal Appetite is ſubdued, and ſanctified Reaſon has the Throne, when he feels ſuch ſtrong

ſtrong and ſweet Impulſives to Holineſs as engage the Will; when the Stream of his Deſires aſcend to the things above, and his Life becomes Holy and Heavenly, he feels and knows this wonderful Change, though the manner how it was wrought he cannot tell. I will ſhew more fully this ſanctifying Work of the Spirit, that we may the better underſtand our State.

The Spirit of God is denominated by various Titles, *the Spirit of Truth*, John 15. 26. *the Spirit of Holineſs*, *the Comforter*, and repreſented by various Types, by Rom. 1. 4. *an Ointment that clarifies the Eye to ſee things aright*, by *cleanſing refreſhing Water*, by *purifying refining Fire*, correſpondent to his ſacred Operations in the Soul.

As the Spirit of Truth, he illuminates the Underſtanding to ſee the Reality and Excellency of ſupernatural and Heavenly things, of the great Myſteries of Godlineſs, of Eternal Glory; ſo that a Chriſtian in his moſt deliberate, ſolemn and compoſed Thoughts, in his exacteſt Valuation infinitely prefers them before the gaudy Vanities of this tranſient World. When the Eyes of the Mind are truly

enlightned, preſent things appear, or rather diſappear, as Shadows.

As the Spirit of Holineſs he renews the Will and Affections, inſpires the Soul with Divine and unutterable Deſires after the Favour and Grace of God, and communicates ſpiritual Power for the Proſecution and obtaining thoſe Deſires.

The Holy Spirit raiſes ſuch a Love to God, that habitually and ſtrongly inclines the Soul to obey his Commands.

This is the moſt clear and eſſential Character of a Chriſtian, the ſpecial and moſt excellent Property of a Saint, upon which all other Holy Qualifications depend. As Reaſon is the firſt and chief Excellence of Man, from whence his other Perfections are derived, that diſtinguiſh him from the Brutes, and give him a natural and regular Preeminence and Dominion over them, ſo that a Man is moſt properly defined a reaſonable Creature. Thus the Love of God is the moſt Divine Grace, the true Form of Holineſs, the Root from whence all other Vertues ſpring and flouriſh, and moſt peculiarly diſtinguiſh a Saint from unregenerate Men, how-

however adorn'd and accompliſh'd; ſo that a Saint is moſt properly defined to be a Lover of God.

This is the Principle of true Holineſs inherent in the Soul, and ſhining in the Converſation, that diſtinguiſhes the Sincerity of a Saint from the Art of Hypocriſy, an affected Appearance of Religion for carnal ſordid reſpects: and from civil Vertue, that reſtrains from what is ignominious and diſgraceful to our Reputation, and makes obnoxious to Penalties of the Laws, and excites to praiſe-worthy Actions, upon worldly Motives: and from Philoſophical Morality, that forbids Vice as contrary to Reaſon, and commends Vertue as the chief Ornament and Perfection of humane Nature, without a Regard to pleaſe and glorify God.

And Divine Love is the Principle of univerſal Holineſs. Love is called *the fulfilling of the Law*, as 'tis a comprehenſive Grace, and as it draws forth all the active Powers of the Soul to do God's Will in an exact manner. Univerſal Obedience is the Exerciſe of Love in various Inſtances. As the Spouſe in the *Song* of *Solomon* is tranſform'd in divers Repreſentations; ſometimes

times as *a Sifter*, ſometimes as *a Warriour*, ſometimes as *the Keeper of a Vineyard*, but ſhe always acted as a Lover, and her chief buſineſs was to pleaſe her Beloved. This Allegorical Deſcription of the Church, ſignifies that when the Soul is inflamed with the Love of God, that Affection will be active and diſcover it ſelf in all it does or ſuffers in the Service of God. This will make a Chriſtian very deſirous and diligent to pleaſe God in all things, and careful not to diſpleaſe him in any thing; for that is the inſeparable Effect of Love. The Felicity of the natural temper, and the force of Education, may cauſe a loathing of ſome Evils, and diſpoſe to ſome good Works, but with a reſerved delight in other Sins, and a ſecret Exception againſt other Duties. Servile Fear is a partial Principle, and cauſes an unequal reſpect to the Divine Precepts: it reſtrains from Sins of greater Guilt, at which Conſcience takes fire: it urges to ſome Duties, the neglect of which cauſes Diſquiet: but the Love of God cauſes the Hatred of Sin; and therefore 'tis againſt all Sin, not only to prevent the Exerciſe of it, but to eradicate

dicate it out of the Soul. All the fearful conſequences of *Sin* do not render it ſo odious to a gracious *Spirit*, as its own proper *Idea* and intrinſick Evil, as 'tis contrary to the holy Nature and Law of God. Love unites the Soul to God, and turns the Thoughts continually to him: and the lively ſenſe of his Majeſty and Preſence, who is ſo pure that he cannot behold Iniquity, cauſes an averſion from all that is diſpleaſing to his Divine Eyes. And from hence it is that a zealous Lover of God is frequent and ſtrict in reviewing his Heart and Ways, and upon the diſcovery of ſinful failings, renews his Repentance, which is the exerciſe of Grief and Love, and renews his purpoſes of more care and circumſpection for the future. Love aſpires to be like God in all poſſible degrees of Purity: for it inflames our Deſires after his Favour, as that which is better than Life, and all the ſweeteſt enjoyments of it, and Holineſs is the powerful attractive of God's delightful Love to us.

Love is the Principle of free, ingenuous, and joyful Obedience. 'Twas our Saviour's Meat and Drink to do the Will of his Father. For Love is the foun-

fountain of Pleaſure, it moves the Soul with Election and Liberty, and makes every thing grateful that proceeds from it. Therefore the Apoſtle declares, *that the Law is not made for a righteous Man*; that is, as it is enforc'd by terrible penalties, to conſtrain rebellious Sinners to Obedience: for Love is an internal living Law in the Heart, and has an Imperial Power over his Actions. And this alſo diſtinguiſhes the renovation of one ſanctified by the Spirit, from the imperfect Change that is made in the Unregenerate. They may ſtop the eruption of corrupt Nature, but *are Swine that being waſh'd, have an inclination to wallow in the Mire:* they may by ſtrong impreſſions of Fear be urged to do many good things; but in this they are like a Bowl that is thrown with ſuch violence, as controuls the drawing of the Bias, and makes it run contrary to it. But Love enclines the Soul to obey the holy Motions of the Spirit with facility: as the Wheels in *Ezekiel*'s Viſion *turned every way with readineſs, as the Spirit moved them.*

And with holy Love there is a ſpiritual Power communicated, that both the natural averſeneſs and impotence

to

to what is good may be healed. By the virtue of the ſanctifying Spirit, the Soul that was dead, abſolutely unable to perform ſpiritual and ſupernatural Acts, *is revived to a kind of Omnipotence, it can do all things*, required by the Evangelical Covenant, by the new Law that is in the hands of our merciful Mediator for Salvation. 'Tis true, there are relicks of Sin in the beſt, and the Fleſh and Spirit are repugnant Principles warring againſt one another: but the holy Spirit will make no capitulation or compoſition with Sin, but is ſo predominant, that Sin is gradually ſubdued, and does not ſo freely and frequently break forth, as it does from the unrenewed. By the acceſſion of his Strength *we are enabled to mortify the Deeds of the Body, to crucify the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſt thereof*: And to perform holy Duties with freedom, alacrity and zeal, in ſuch a manner as is acceptable to God. In ſhort, ſaving Grace is diſtinguiſh'd from that which is common to the Unregenerate, by its prevalency and conſtancy. There may be a declination in the Saints tending to a downfal; but *the Seed of God*, that ſupernatural Grace that *remains in them*,

them, will by the Power of the holy Spirit recover the Supremacy. Others may be enlightned, and feel ſome good Motions, and tranſient Touches; as *Saul* had his rapture among the Prophets; but they are not truly, entirely, and perſeveringly converted to God; they are not proof againſt the allurements or Terrors of the World. They make a fair Profeſſion till they are tried by Temptations. Congealed drops of Water appear like ſolid Chryſtal, till the warm beams of the Sun diſſolve them, and diſcover the hypocriſy of the Chryſtal. Falſe Jewels may ſeem to have the luſtre of Diamonds, till they are broke by a fall, and diſcovered to be Glaſs. Thus the Riches, the Honours and Pleaſures of the Fleſh melt ſome, and temporal Evils break the Reſolutions of others, and make it evident they were not ſincere Converts. But where the holy Spirit ſavingly works, he is ſaid *to dwell:* he is not like a Paſſenger, or a Tenant at will, that neglects the Houſe, and ſuffers it to fall into ruine, but as the Proprietary and Owner he keeps perpetual reſidence in true Chriſtians, and by his continual Influence preſerves them from final Apoſtacy. Now

Now from hence we may judg whether we have an Intereſt in Chriſt and his Benefits. For the Apoſtle clearly tells us, *That if any Man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.* By this ſacred Signature, we are appropriated to Chriſt, and viſibly diſtinguiſhed from the World. For though the ſecret and pure Influences of the Spirit in the Soul are only known to the Perſon that feels them, yet his active Inſpirations are declarative of his Preſence and Power in the outward Converſation. As the Wind that is of ſo thin and ſubtil a nature that 'tis inviſible in it ſelf, but we certainly know from what Point it blows by the courſe and way that the Ship makes: thus the Spirit of God, who is compared to the Wind, is diſcovered by an infallible Indication, his Fruits and Effects in a holy Life. And thoſe who have communion with Chriſt by his Spirit, have a ſhare in his Victories, and may with confidence meet the laſt Enemy, Death: For we are aſſured, *If the Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, dwell in us, he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead ſhall alſo quicken our mortal Bodies, by the Spirit that dwelleth in us.*

Rom. 8. 9.

Rom. 8. 11.

A preparative conformity to Chriſt in Grace, will be followed with a conſummate in Glory. But thoſe who never felt the ſanctifying efficacy of the Spirit in their Hearts and Lives, though they are Chriſtians in profeſſion, yet they have no other Union with Chriſt, than a dead Branch with a Tree that receives no ſap and virtue from it; or an artificial Member joined to the Body, that may have the outward clothing and ornaments proper to that part, but derives no Life and Senſe from it. *Whoever is in Chriſt is a new Creature.* And only *thoſe who partake in the firſt Reſurrection from Sin, ſhall be exempted from the Power of the ſecond Death*, and upon juſt grounds are freed from the Terrors of the firſt.

2 Cor. 5. 17.

To apply this Point, let us,

1. Conſider our dear Obligations to our bleſſed Saviour, who to free us from the ſting and enſlaving fear of Death, ſubmitted to it with all its Terrors from God and wicked Men. He felt a Sadneſs to an Agony in his Soul, and ſuffered the equal extremities of Ignominy and Torment in his Body. The Favour of God was intercepted from

from him, that it may ſhine upon us in that gloomy hour. And all his terrible Sufferings, though foreknown by his enlightned Mind, could not weaken his determined Will to undergo them for us: But when *Peter* regarded with a more tender eye his Life than our Salvation, he was repell'd with indignation: Unparallel'd Love! no leſs than Divine, tranſcending all the Inſtances of humane Affection. The higheſt kind and exceſs of Love amongſt Men is to die for another, and the higheſt degree in that kind is to die to ſave an Enemy; and of this our Saviour is the ſingular Example: Love incomprehenſible! *it paſſes knowledg, and all underſtanding* but his who expreſs'd it. His Love was equal to the heighth of his Glory from whence he deſcended, and the depth of his Sufferings that he ſuſtained in our ſtead. *By waſhing us from our Sins in his Blood, he makes us Kings*, dignifies us with ſpiritual Soveraignty over not only defiling, but diſturbing Paſſions. The freeſt and moſt confident Sinner in the World, that rebels againſt the Divine Laws without reſtraint, is a Slave not only under the Revel. 1.

Chains of his imperious Luſts, but in that he is liable to the ſcourgings of Conſcience when ever awaken'd, and to the ſervile fear of Death every day. But the ſincere Chriſtian has a clear and ſweet Peace, a bleſſed Tranquillity, from the tormenting apprehenſions and fears of Death, that are the juſt conſequents of Guilt.

Macti ingenio eſte Cœli interpretes, rerumque naturæ capaces, Argumenti repertores, quo Deos homineſque vinxiſtis. *Plin. lib.* 2.

One of the ancient Romans highly celebrates the *Aſtronomers*, who diſcover'd the true Cauſes of the Eclipſes of the Sun and Moon, and freed the World from the double darkneſs of Ignorance and Fear; for before that Diſcovery, Men believed the obſcuring of thoſe great Lights were the fainting fits of Nature, and mortal Symptoms threatning an univerſal Calamity. But what Praiſe and Bleſſing is due to our Saviour, who hath given us infallible aſſurance that the Death of the Righteous is not, as the Heathen World imagin'd, an irreparable loſs of Life, but a ſhort eclipſing of this low and mean Light that is common to ſenſitive Creatures, to be reſtored more excellent and permanent in Heaven; where thoſe Stars ſhine in the Divine Preſence for ever?

ever? *Thanks be to God which gives us the Victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* This ſhould render him *infinitely precious to us*, and inflame our Hearts with Deſires equal to our Obligations to ſerve him.

2. Let us make it the main Buſineſs of our Lives to remove from our Souls the juſt Fears of Death. 'Tis one of the ſolemn Follies of the World to fear where there is no cauſe: As if a Sentinel ſhould miſtake Gloworms in the Night for lighted Matches, and give a falſe Alarm: but 'tis a worſe Folly, though pleaſing, not to fear when there is the greateſt Reaſon to excite it. And 'tis ſo in the preſent Caſe: for the moſt are without the Fear of Death, that ſhould make them ſerious in preparing for it: nay, to maintain their Security, are as unwilling to hear Conſcience declare the *Wretchedneſs* of their Condition with reſpect to Eternity, as *Ahab* was the Prophet *Micaiah, who always foretold evil things to him.*

'Twas the chief Deſign of the Philoſophers, by Principles of Reaſon to fortify themſelves againſt all frightful Accidents, and with a maſculine Mind,

with an Heart ardent, and with generous Spirits to * encounter this inevitable Evil. When one of them was threatned by the Emperor *Antigonus* with preſent Death, he boldly replied, Threaten this to your diſſolute Courtiers that are ſoftned and melted by ſenſual Pleaſures, and eaſily receptive of terrible Impreſſions, not to a Philoſopher to whom Death is contemptible in any Appearance. This was a piece of affected Bravery; for Pagan Philoſophy could never furniſh them with Armor of Proof againſt the Dart of our laſt Enemy. But the Goſpel aſſuring us that Death is an Entrance into Immortality, makes that to be the Reality of a Chriſtian, that was a vain boaſt of the Philoſophers.

* Fœlix qui potuit rerum cognoſcere cauſas: Atque metus mortis & inexorabile fatum Subjecit pedibus. *Virgil.*

Now that we may be eſtabliſh'd in that bleſſed Tranquillity that Death cannot diſcompoſe, the following Directions are infinitely uſeful.

1. We muſt give all Diligence to be in a State of Reconciliation with God. The things requiſit to that are, as the Apoſtle declares, *Repentance towards God, and Faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Repentance includes a Godly Sorrow for

Acts 20. 21.

for Sins paſt, with a Deteſtation and forſaking them ſincerely, without Hypocriſy, and entirely, without Partiality in the Heart and Converſation. 'Tis call'd *Repentance from dead Works*: the proper Name of our Sins, that deſerve Eternal Death. By Repentance we return to Obedience that is due to God our Maker and Lawgiver. Faith reſpects the Redeemer, who by his Blood ſhed on the Croſs, and pleaded in Heaven, reconciles God to penitent Sinners. The Belief of his merciful and powerful Mediation for our Acceptance and Pardon, *Works by Love*, and *conſtrains us* to dedicate our ſelves in a devoted Propriety to his Glory and Service, and to live according to that Dedication. Theſe two are abſolutely neceſſary to the vital and ſalvifical State of a Chriſtian. And as ſoon as a Perſon ſincerely repents and believes, he is juſtified before God; and, if he dies, will certainly obtain eternal Glory. This ſhould be the early and moſt ſpeedy Work of our Lives: for the Delay of Repentance, and Neglect of ſecuring the Favour of God, arms Death with more Stings and Terrors.

Heb. 6. 1.

2 Cor. 5. 14.

The infinite Danger of this I will unfold, to awaken the Careleſs and Secure.

The Devil is a Sophiſter in Perfection, and his ordinary and ſucceſsful Artifice to elude the force of preſent Conviction, and wrap Men in Sin and Damnation, is to induce them to delay the great Work of the Soul till afterward. He is not ſo fooliſh to tell them, as he did our firſt Parents, *Ye ſhall not die*, for the Temptation is ſo palpable, that it could deceive none. Though the Evidence and Certainty of ſupernatural Truths, that diſturb the Security of Sinners, is ſometimes obſcur'd by affected Doubts, yet there is no Artifice that can reſiſt the full and ſtrong Conviction in Men, that Death is inevitable. Though Nature recoils from it with Abhorrence, yet this ſad Truth is ſo viſible, that it forces an Aſſent from all. Thoſe who are titular Gods, the greateſt Princes, are not ſo vain as to pretend to an Exemption by Privilege from that fatal Neceſſity; they cannot fancy to be imbalm'd alive, and that Nature may be made incorruptible by Art: The Palace is as near the Grave as the Cottage: therefore the Devil che-

cheriſhes in Men fond hopes of a long Life: As ſome optick Glaſſes deceive the Sight, and make a ſuperficial Repreſentation in Colours on a Wall but two or three Steps diſtant, appear a long deep Gallery. Thus the Tempter by a dangerous Deceit preſents to the Imagination the fatal term at a great Diſtance; and ſince he cannot leſſen the Certainty of Death in Mens Belief, he removes the Image of it out of their Memories, to weaken the Impreſſion that it is capable to make on their Affections: they dare not venture to die, as they live, careleſs of Salvation, and unprepared for their Accounts with God; therefore they ſuſpend the Workings of Conſcience by a ſeeming Compliance; they reſolve at random to convert and reform hereafter, but will not determine at preſent to forſake their Sins. The Tempter inſinuates, there will be a long Interval between the preſent time and the laſt hour, that ſhall decide their State for ever; that it will be a convenient ſeaſon to prepare for the other World when they have done with this; as if Repentance were beſt at laſt, when there are no Temptations,

and therefore no Danger of retracting it. And the Heart of Man is a great Flatterer, very ſubtile to deceive and ruin him with vain Reſolutions of a devout Retirement, and becoming ſeriouſly religious hereafter; and thus by an eaſy Permiſſion he gratifies the preſent Deſires of the Fleſh, and goes in a Circuit from one Vanity to another, till Death ſurprize the Preſumer. 'Tis very applicable to this purpoſe, what *Athen.* is related of *Alcæus* the Poet, who from every ſeaſon of the Year, took Arguments to give a new Title to his Intemperance; The Spring he ſaid, required liberal drinking in Sign of Joy for the Renovation of Nature; the Summer to temper our Heat, and refreſh our Thirſt; 'twas due to Autumn that is dedicated to the Vintage; and Winter required it to expel the cold, that would congeal the Blood and Spirits. Thus he pleaded for the Allowance of his Exceſs. And ſo Men in the ſeveral Ages of Life, (that are correſpondent to the Seaſons of the Year) frame ſome Excuſes to delay Repentance, and give ſome colour to their Rebellion againſt God, who commands us to hear his Voice to Day, obediently and immediately,

mediately, upon no leſs Penalty than being excluded from his bleſſed Reſt for ever: Yet the ſelf-deceiving Sinner preaches another Goſpel to himſelf, and thinks the Vanities of Childhood, the Pleaſures of Youth, the Buſineſs of Middle-Age, and the Infirmity of Old Age, are plauſible Pretences to put off the ſerious Work of Repentance: O that ſuch would duly conſider the deſperate Uncertainty upon which Men build their Hopes of a future Repentance, and Divine Acceptance.

Heb 2. 7, 8. Quis enim ſatis explicet verbis, quantum mali ſit non obedire tanto poteſtatis imperio, & tanto tenenti ſupplicio?

1. Men delay Repentance upon the Preſumption of a long Life: But what is more uncertain? 'Tis the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God to conceal in his impenetrable Counſels the time of our Sojourning here: For if Men, though liable to Death every hour, and therefore ſhould be under juſt Fear, leſt it ſurprize them unprepar'd, yet againſt ſo ſtrong a Curb, run with that exorbitant vehemence after the preſent World; how much more licentious would they be, if ſecured from ſudden Death? But none can promiſe to himſelf one Day. Death comes not according to the order of Nature, but the Decree of

of God. How many in the Flower of their Youth and Strength thought themſelves at as great a Diſtance from Death, as the Eaſt is from the Weſt, when there was not the ſpace of an Hour between them and Death, between them and Hell? The Lamp ſuddenly expires by a Blaſt of Wind, when there is plenty of Oil to feed it. The rich Man pleaſed himſelf with Deſigns of ſenſual Enjoyments for many years, yet did not ſee the dawning of the next Morning: *Thou Fool, this Night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee.* This Sentence is pronounced in Heaven againſt thouſands that are now alive, converſant in the Vanities and Buſineſs of the World, Eating and Drinking, Playing and Trading, and all unconcerned as to dying, yet ſhall breath their laſt before to Morrow, and their unwilling Souls be rent from the Embraces of their Bodies. In various manners Men die from inward and outward cauſes; an Apoplexy, an Impoſthume, a Flux of Rhume ſtopping Reſpiration, kills the Body without any preſaging Signs of Death: As if the Roof and all the Chambers ſhould fall within the Houſe, while the Walls

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are ſtanding entire: And how many unforeſeen Accidens, and therefore inevitable, put a ſudden Period to Life? Is it not our trueſt Wiſdom by an early Repentance to prepare for Death, when the Seaſon is certainly ſhort, and but uncertainly continued, and the Omiſſion is irreparable?

2. Suppoſe Life be continued, yet Sinners that delay Repentance, can have no rational hopes that they ſhall ſincerely repent in time to come. For,

1*ſt*. Saving Repentance is the Gift of God: and is it likely that thoſe who have been inſenſible of the loud and earneſt Calls of the Word, inflexible to the gracious Methods of his Providence leading them to Repentance, ſhould at laſt obtain Converting Grace? The Gales of the Spirit are very tranſient and blow where he pleaſes; and can it be expected that thoſe who have wilfully and often reſiſted him, ſhould by an exuberant Favour receive afterwards more powerful Grace, to over-rule their ſtubborn Wills, and make them obedient? To expect Divine Grace and the powerful Workings of the Spirit, after long reſiſting his Holy Excitations,

ons, is both unreaſonable and unrevealed. 'Tis written as with a Sunbeam, that God will graciouſly pardon repenting Sinners that reform their Lives, but 'tis no-where promiſed that he will give Saving-Repentance to thoſe who ſecurely continue in Sin, upon a corrupt Confidence they will repent at laſt. Our Saviour threatens to him that neglects the improving the Grace that is offer'd, *That which he hath ſhall be taken away:* Yet Men unwilling at preſent to forſake their Sins of Pleaſure and Profit, vainly hope they ſhall obtain Grace hereafter, without any Promiſe from God, and againſt the Tenor of his Threatnings. God has threatned that his Spirit *ſhall not always ſtrive with rebellious Sinners*, and then their State is remedileſs. This may be the caſe of many in this Life, who are inſenſible of their Miſery. As conſumptive Perſons decline by degrees, loſe their Appetite, Colour, and Strength, till at laſt they are hopeleſs: So the Withdrawings of the Spirit are gradual, his Motions are not ſo ſtrong nor frequent; and upon the continued Provocations of the Diſobedient, finally leaves them under that moſt fearful doom,

Nemo ergo ſibi promittat, quod evangelium non promittit. *Aug.*

doom, *He that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill*; *He that is unrighteous, let him be unrighteous ſtill*: and thus puniſhes them on this ſide Hell, as he does the Damned, by giving them over to Sin. 'Tis a bloody Adventure for Men to indulge their carnal Appetites, as if they had infallible Aſſurance that they ſhould not die in an impenitent State. The Delayer does not regularly truſt, but tempt God.

2*aly*. Suppoſe the Holy Spirit be not totally withdrawn, yet by every Day's Continuance in Sin, the Heart is more hardned againſt the Impreſſions of Grace, more averſe from returning to God, and Repentance more difficult and hazardous. The laſt guilty Diſpoſition that ſeals up the Damnation of Sinners is Impenitence. Now he that delays the returning to his Duty, ſhall have more cauſe to repent hereafter, but leſs Will and Power; for Sin repeated, makes him more uncapable of Repentance, and that which is Indiſpoſition, will become Averſeneſs and Obſtinacy. The Heart with Difficulty changes its laſt End. Actions may be ſuddenly chang'd, when there is a Diſability to perform them; but the inward

ward Inclinations to Sin, without ſupernatural renewing Grace, remain. 'Tis therefore the Subtilty of the old Serpent to make the Entrance of Sin eaſy: for he knows that Cuſtom is a ſecond Nature, and has a mighty Power in us: *Can an Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard change his Spots? then may you who are accuſtomed to do Evil, do good.* If Sin in its Infancy can make ſuch Reſiſtance, that the Spirit of Grace is foil'd in his Motions to reſcue the Soul from its Bondage, how much more when 'tis grown into a confirm'd Habit? Therefore the Apoſtle urges ſo zealouſly; *To Day if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts, leſt any be hardned through the Deceitfulneſs of Sin.*

3. How uncertain is it whether God will accept the Addreſſes of ſuch at laſt? We are commanded, *Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.* The Limitation implies, if the Seaſon be neglected, he will hide his Face for ever. Now in caſes of great Moment and Hazard, what Diligence, what Caution ſhould be uſed?

1*ſt.* Conſider how derogatory it is to his Majeſty, to offer to him the Dregs

Dregs of our Age, the Reliques of a licentious careleſs Life, ſpent in the Works of Vanity. Is this *to give Glory to God?* Jer. 13. 16. Contempt provokes Superiours as much as actual Injuries: How vilifying is it of his excellent Greatneſs, that Men laviſhly waſte the beſt of their Time and Strength upon their Luſts, and when through Weakneſs of Age, or the Violence of a Diſeaſe, they can no more do the Acts of Sin, nor reliſh the Pleaſures of Sin; to preſume that God will upon their Prayers forgive their Sins ſo long indulg'd, and of ſuch violent Provocations, and receive them into his Kingdom, as if he could not be happy without them, and it were his Intereſt to receive them? God has laid his Exceptions againſt ſuch Addreſſes: He may juſtly ſtand upon his Greatneſs and Honour: *If ye offer the Blind for a Sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the Lame and Sick, is it not evil? Offer it now to thy Governour, will he be pleaſed with it, to accept thy Perſon, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts?* As the Lord upbraids the Jews for their black Ingratitude in barginning for thirty pieces of Silver, to have him betrayed to their Malice; *a goodly Price that I*

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was prized at of them. So when there is an univerſal Proſtration of all the Powers and Faculties, when the Spirits are damp'd, the vital Heat is check'd, and the function of the ſenſes is obſtructed, then to ſeek to God for Mercy, and to make fair Promiſes of Obedience, he may juſtly reproach the Preſumer, *a goodly time you have allotted for me!* Your Youth and Strength, the Golden Age of Life, has been waſted on your Luſts, and in the Buſineſs of the World; and the wretched remains you think worthy of my Acceptance.

2*dly.* Conſider what Sincerity or moral Value is in Religion that meerly proceeds from bitter Conſtraint? 'Tis a Rule in Law, *Falſum eſt eam peperiſſe, cui mortuæ filius extractus eſt:* 'Tis not a natural Birth when the Child is extracted from the dead Mother: 'Tis not genuine Piety that is extorted by the rack, whilſt the Heart full of Reluctancy does not truly conſent: Pure Religion flows uncompell'd from Love to God; 'tis the Dregs that come forth with preſſing. 'Tis obſerv'd of the

Pſal 78. 34, 36. *Iſraelites*, that *when God ſlew them, they ſought him, and returned and enquired early*

early after God. But 'tis added, *Nevertheleſs they did flatter him with their Mouths, and they lied to him with their Tongues; for their Hearts were not right with him, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his Covenant.* How often does Experience convince us of the Inefficacy of a Sickbed-Repentance? How many that were very devout and mournful with one Foot as it were in the Grave, and another in Hell, and were as a Brand pluck'd out of the Fire; yet when the Fear of Death is removed, all the Terrors of Conſcience, the religious Affections that were felt and expreſs'd by them, vaniſh as the Morning-Dew? Now converting Grace is diſtinguiſh'd by its radication and efficacy, not only from the mere Pretences of thoſe who know their own Inſincerity, but from the real Workings of Conſcience, and the imperfect Diſpoſitions to Good that are in the Unrenewed. And thoſe Perſons who with the return of Health, have returned to their Sins, if they had died with their religious Reſolutions, would have preſum'd, *that their Repentance was unto Life*, and of their Intereſt in the Divine Mercy. *The Heart*

is deceitful above all things, and above all things deceitful to it ſelf. Beſides, when Sinners are plunged in deep Diſtreſs, when the ſhadow of Death ſits upon their Eye-lids, they may with plentiful effuſions of Tears deſire God to receive them to Heaven, not to ſee and praiſe his adorable Excellencies, not to pleaſe and glorify him for ever, but as a Sanctuary from revenging Juſtice, a Refuge from Hell. And will ſuch Prayers prevail? What ſwells the Confidence of Sinners, but unworthy Notions of God, as if a forc'd and formal Confeſſion of their Sins could deceive his all-diſcerning Eye; and Deſires merely terminated on themſelves, were ſufficient to reconcile his offended Majeſty?

3. There is nothing renders Men more unworthy of Mercy than continuance in Sin, upon preſumption of an eaſy Pardon at laſt. This is the moſt provoking Abuſe of his *Goodneſs and Long-ſuffering, that ſhould lead them unto Repentance.* He can in the twinkling of an eye, in the beating of a Pulſe cut off the Sinner: 'tis as eaſy to his Power as to will it. And there is

Rom. 2.

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no Conſideration ſhould be ſo melting and moving as his Clemency. We read of *David*, that he had more than once in his power *Saul* his unjuſt and cruel Enemy, yet ſpared him: the effect of it was, that *Saul* was ſoftened, and under ſuch compunction of Spirit, that he wept, confeſs'd his Guilt, and perſecuted him no more, overcome by that unexampled Love: *If a Man find his Enemy, will he let him go?* Yet Men take advantage from the Goodneſs of God, ſecurely to deſpiſe his Laws. The habitual Sinner thinks that God is ſo gracious, ſuch a Lover of Souls, ſo eaſy to be intreated, that upon his dying Prayer, *Lord, remember me in thy Kingdom*, the Anſwer will be, *To day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.* This is the deceitful Principle upon which Men uſually build their Hopes, as their Actions, that bear the Image of their Minds, clearly manifeſt. Now this preſumptuous Indulgence gives the deepeſt grain to their Sins, and makes them more uncapable of Pardon. *Chryſoſtom* obſerves, that *Judas* was encouraged to betray his Maſter, preſuming on his Lenity, Goodneſs, Benignity, 1 Sam. 26. 21.

which Conſiderations intolerably aggravated his Treaſon, and confounded his Hopes. There is a dreadful threatning againſt thoſe who reject the Invitations of Grace in their Proſperity, and when the righteous Judg comes to Sentence and Execution, are earneſt Suppliants for Mercy. *Becauſe I have called, and ye have refuſed; I have ſtretch'd out my Hands, and no Man regarded: But ye have ſet at naught all my Counſel, and would none of my Reproof: I will alſo laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear comes: When your Fear comes as a Deſolation, and your Deſtruction as a Whirlwind, when Diſtreſs and Anguiſh come upon you; then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early, but ſhall not find me: For they hated Knowledg, and did not chooſe the Fear of the Lord.* A doleful Caſe beyond all poſſible expreſſion! when the ſinful Creature, forſaken of all Comforts below, addreſſes to Heaven for Relief, and meets with Deriſion and Fury, Scorn and Indignation. The fooliſh Virgins, careleſs to prepare for the Bridegroom's Coming, in vain at laſt diſcover'd their want of Oil, in vain folli-

Prov. 1.

ſollicited the wiſe Virgins for Supply, in vain knock'd at the door, crying, *Lord, Lord, open to us*; the Anſwer was ſevere and peremptory, *I know you not*; and they were for ever excluded from the Joys of Heaven. Matth. 25.

4. How incongruous is it to delay the ſolemn Work of Reconciliation with God till the time of Sickneſs. This is an Affair wherein our tranſcendent Intereſt is concerned, and ſhould be performed in our moſt calm and ſenſible Condition, when we are moſt capable of reflecting upon our Ways, and making an exact trial of our ſelves, in order to our returning to God by a holy Change of our Lives. Now that the Time of Sickneſs is not a convenient Seaſon for this Work, is ſadly evident; for ſome Diſeaſes are ſtupifying, and all the Powers of the Soul are benumm'd in a dull Captivity; ſo that the ſick Man only perceives with his animal Faculties. Some Diſeaſes are tormenting, and cauſe a great Diſorder in the Soul, and diſtract the Thoughts from conſidering his ſpiritual State. When the Storm is at the higheſt, and the Pilot ſo ſick that he can give no Directi-

ons, the Ship is left to the fury of the Winds, and eſcapes by Miracle. When there is a Tempeſt in the Humours of the Body, and the Soul by Sympathy is ſo diſcompos'd, that it cannot apply it ſelf to prepare for its appearance before the Divine Tribunal, what danger of being loſt, and paſſing from a ſhort Agony to everlaſting Torment?

Male cum his agitur, quibus neceſſitas incumbit belli & morbi. *Vig.*

Beſides; Suppoſe the Sickneſs more tolerable, yet how unfit is a Perſon weak and languiſhing, when Senſe and Conſcience are both afflicted, to encounter with the cruel Enemy of Souls? All that ſincerely ſeek Peace with God, muſt expect fierce Anger and War from Satan: therefore 'tis a point of neceſſary Wiſdom, whilſt our Bodies and Minds are in the beſt order, to be preparing againſt his Aſſaults.

5. Conſider how uncomfortable it is to delay Repentance till Age and Sickneſs, when the Fruits of it are not ſo evident nor acceptable: In evil days, and the Approaches of Death, 'tis very hard to diſcover the Sincerity of the Heart, whether Repentance proceeds from Holy Principles, whether the Sorrow then expreſs'd be *Godly* for Sin,

or

or meerly *natural*, for Puniſhment; whether the good Reſolutions be the Effects of permanent Fidelity, or of violent Fear, that will vaniſh, the cauſe being removed. When the Invitations to Sin ceaſe, there may remain a ſecret undiſcerned Love to it in the Heart, which is the Centre of Corruption, and Root of Apoſtacy. The Snake that ſeem'd dead in the Froſt, revived by the Fire. The inordinate Affections that ſeemed mortified, when the ſenſitive Faculties were diſabled to carnal Enjoyments, may have inward Life, and will ſoon be active and vigorous in the Preſence of Temptations. And that a Deathbed-Repentance is uſually deceitful, appears from hence, that not one of a thouſand that recover from dangerous Diſeaſes are faithful in performing their moſt ſacred and ſolemn Vows. How many having the Sentence of Death in themſelves, and under the Terrors of the Lord, have expreſſed the greateſt Deteſtation of their Sins, and reſolved, as they thought ſincerely, if God would ſpare them, to reform their ways, to become new Creatures, exem-

plary in all Holy Converſation; yet the Danger being over, their Heats of Devotion expire as they revive, and their Luſts recover Strength with their Bodies, and being ſuppreſs'd only by Fear, are more fierce in their Return. Their Hearts were as Marble, that in rainy Weather ſeems diſſolved into Water, but 'tis only from the Moiſture of the Air, and remains as hard as ever: When the Fear of Death is removed, all their Promiſes of Reformation are ineffective, as violent and void; all their religious Affections vaniſh as the Morning-Dew. Now if theſe Perſons had died before this viſible Trial and Diſcovery, they had paſt into the other World with the Reputation of true Penitents, deceiving others with their Prayers and Tears, and liberal Promiſes, the outward Signs of Repentance, and deceived themſelves by the inward Workings of an alarmed Conſcience: Therefore Miniſters ſhould be very circumſpect in applying the Promiſes of Mercy to Perſons in ſuch a State; for an Error in that kind has fearful Conſequences. A little opiate Divinity may quiet the Mind for a time,

time, but the Virtue of it will be ſoon ſpent, and the Preſumer periſhes for ever. But ſuppoſe a dying Perſon with true Tears and unfeigned perſevering Affections returns to God; Can he have a comfortable Aſſurance of his Sincerity? Indeed the Searcher and Judg of Hearts will accept him: but how doubtful and wavering are his Hopes? what anxious Fears are in his Breaſt, leſt he builds upon a ſandy Foundation? And how dreadful is it to appear before the Tribunal of God, and expect an uncertain Sentence?

But Sinners ſtill pleaſe themſelves in this, that God has effectually called ſome at the laſt Hour, and they may find the ſame Favour with others. To this I anſwer:

1. 'Tis true, we have ſome rare admirable Inſtances of God's Mercy and Grace, the dying Thief and ſome others, which ſhew'd 'tis poſſible with God to aboliſh the moſt confirmed Habits in a ſhort time, and by a ſwift Converſion to prepare a Sinner for Heaven. But theſe miraculous Examples are not to be drawn into Conſequence for the Encouragement of any in their Sins.

‖ Quod alicui gratiosè conceditur, trahi non debet ab aliis in exemplum.

Sins. A ‖ Prince will not endure that his free Favours ſhould be made a Law to him, and the ſpecial Privilege of ſome be extended to all? As *Thales* ſaid, An old Mariner that has eſcap'd the various Dangers by Rocks and Storms at Sea, was a new Miracle: So that one who has lived an obſtinate Sinner, dies a penitent Believer, is very rare and extraordinary. What our Saviour ſaid concerning the Salvation of rich Men, is juſtly applicable to this Caſe, *That it was as eaſy for a Camel to go through the eye of a Needle, as for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* This ſo aſtoniſh'd the Apoſtles, that they cried, *Who then can be ſaved?* To mitigate the Difficulty, he remembers them of the Divine Omnipotence: *All things are poſſible with God.* Thus for one who has been hardned in a long courſe of Sin, and making himſelf meet for the Company of damned Spirits in Hell, to be at laſt ſuddenly prepared and received into the pure and glorious Society above, is poſſible, but poſſible only as Miracles are by the Efficacy of Infinite Power; and we cannot reaſonably expect ſuch Miracles. And are Heaven and Hell ſuch trivial things as

to

to be left to an Uncertainty? Are not Men concern'd in another manner in the Affairs of this World? How careful to prevent the Sentence of Death, of Imprisonment, of Banishment? How diligent to obtain some temporal Advantage? Yet how neglectful in things of highest importance? It may be, says the secure Wretch, God will give me Repentance at last, as he did to others. Remember you speak of *that* that most nearly concerns your Soul, and dare you venture the Salvation of an immortal Soul upon a naked possibility of receiving Grace? What reasonable Person would neglect a Disease that may prove deadly, and rely on extreme Remedies? And can you be guilty of such a cruel Indifference, such a desperate Carelessness, as to leave eternal Salvation and Damnation to a peradventure?

Τί λέγεις ἴσως, ἐννόησον, ὅτι περὶ Ψυχῆς βουλεύη. *Chrys.*

2. Consider how many thousands have died in their Sins, and of them great Numbers cherish'd fallacious Hopes of repenting at last. *Diagoras* the Atheist, that denied a governing Providence of things in this lower World, the Sphere of Mutability, when one for his Conviction shewed him in the

Vix dici potest quantos hæc inanis spei umbra deceperit. *Aug.*

† *Tull.* the † Temple of *Neptune* many votive Tables, containing the grateful Acknowledgments of those who by Addresses to the Gods in dangerous Storms, had arrived safe at their Ports; and ask'd him, Whether he had observ'd those numerous Testimonies for Divine Providence? He replied, *I see them*; *Tully.* *but how many having invocated* Neptune, *yet perish'd in the Ocean, and never came to pay their Vows for Deliverance?* 'Twas Impiety in him to argue so against God's disposing Providence; but it may be justly said to those who neglect their present Duty, presuming upon some Examples of his glorious Goodness on those who were converted and saved in their approaches to Death. How many have finally miscarried in shooting that Gulph, to one that has arrived safe at Heaven? How many that presume, upon their Youth and Strength, to delay Repentance, are suddenly cut off? the first Symptom of their Sickness is Death. And what the Angel with such solemnity declar'd, *that Time should be no more*, is verified concerning them by an unexpected Dissolution. How many, when sick, hope either by the Vigour of Nature, or the Virtue of Medicines,

dicines, to overcome the Diſeaſe? and this Hope is cheriſh'd by the mortal Kindneſs, the cruel Deceit of Friends, who are unwilling to diſcover their Danger, leſt their Spirits ſhould ſink under the apprehenſion of it. And thus deluded, many never ſee Death till they feel it, and periſh for ever in their Impenitence. How many that are guilty and graceleſs, when diſtant from Death and Hell but a few hours, yet from Atheiſm are ſecure as *Jonah*, who ſlept in the midſt of a Tempeſt at Sea? The Tenour of their Lives diſcovers this to be Divine Vengeance, they are ſeiz'd by a Spirit of Slumber, and paſs without fear into the State of everlaſting Deſperation. How many are deceived with the appearance of Repentance, and miſtake a falſe Peace for a true, and aſſwage the anguiſh of Conſcience by palliating Remedies? Their Sorrow for Sin, their Prayers, their Reſolutions of Reformation, are the product of ſervile Fear, that is ineffectual to Salvation: And as 'tis with crafty Tradeſmen, that take up much upon Truſt, when near breaking; ſo they are very liberal of the Promiſes of Amendment, when they are near dying.

From

From hence they vainly preſume that God is reconcil'd to them, whoſe all-diſcerning Eye ſees the inward Spring of their Sorrows, and the Principle of all their religious Reſolutions is the guilty fear of eternal Judgment. Now a falſe Tranquillity is more terrible than the Storms of a troubled Spirit: for thoſe who hope upon deceitful grounds, are in the moſt hopeleſs State, neglecting what is requiſite in order to Salvation. Thus innumerable paſs in a Cloud of Deluſion to the Kingdom of Darkneſs. And how many who have lived in careleſs Security, as if they had *made a Covenant with Death*, when Conſcience is awaken'd, and looks into the depth of their Guilt, when they ſee Death before them attended with Judgment, and Judgment with an everlaſting Hell, as we read of *Siſera*, who from extream Fear, paſs'd to extream Security; ſo on the contrary, theſe Self-deceivers from Security have fallen into Deſpair. Then Truth and Conſcience that were ſo long under unrighteous Reſtraints, break the Fetters, and terribly charge the Sinners: Then innumerable Acts, which they thought to be innocent, appear to be Sins; and

Sin

Sin that they made light of, to be infinitely evil, and in the higheſt degree hateful to God. And ſometimes by the Suggeſtions of the Enemy of Souls, they are overwhelmed with Deſpair, and their laſt Error is worſe than the firſt. The Devil makes his advantage of the timerous Conſcience, as well as of the ſeared: Solitude is his Scene as well as the noiſy Theatre; and by contrary ways, either Preſumption or Deſpair, brings Sinners to the ſame end. He changes his Methods according to their Diſpoſitions; the Tempter turns Accuſer; and then ſuch who had but a dim ſight of Sin before, have an overquick ſight of it, and are ſwallowed up in an abyſs of Confuſion. The Condition of ſuch is extreamly miſerable. 'Tis obſerved of thoſe who are bitten with a mad Dog, that their Cure is extream ‖ difficult, if not impoſſible; for being tormented with Thirſt, yet are ſo fearful of Water, that the ſight of it ſometimes cauſes ſudden Convulſions and Death. This is a ſignificant Emblem of a deſpairing Soul: For when inraged Conſcience bites to the quick, the guilty Perſon fill'd with Eſtuations and Terrors, ardently thirſts for

‖ Miſerrimum morbi genus, in quo æger & ſiti & aquæ metu cruciatur, quorum ſpes in anguſto eſt. *Cæl.*

for Pardon, yet fearfully forſakes his own Mercies. Whatever is propounded to encourage Faith in the Divine Promiſes, he turns to juſtify his Infidelity. Repreſent to him the infinite Mercies of God, the unvaluable Merits of Chriſt ſufficient to redeem the loſt World, it increaſes his Deſpair, becauſe he has perverſly abuſed thoſe Mercies, and neglected thoſe Merits. The moſt precious Promiſes of the Goſpel are killing Terrors to him: as the ſweet Title of *Friend*, wherewith our Saviour receiv'd *Judas* when he came to betray him, was the moſt ſtinging Reproach of his perfidious Villany. Thus it appears how dangerous it is to delay Repentance and Reconciliation with God till Sickneſs and a Death-bed, when the remembrance or forgetfulneſs of Sin, the ſenſe or ſecurity of Conſcience may be equally deſtructive.

The Sum of what has been amplified in this Part is this: A vain hope of living long, and being reconcil'd to God when Men pleaſe, is the fatal Foundation of their Sins and Miſery. They apply the Word of God againſt the Mind of God, and ſecurely provoke him, as if they could take Heaven by Vio-

Violence, in contradiction to the Goſpel. But they uſually diſpoſe of that time they ſhall never enjoy, and preſume upon that Mercy and Grace they ſhall never obtain. We are commanded *to ſeek the Lord while he may be found*; a ſad Intimation that 'tis not in our power to find him to our Comfort when we pleaſe: He ſpares long, but abuſed Patience will deliver Sinners to revenging Juſtice. *Sampſon* was three times in the Chamber of his Luſt, expos'd to Treachery, and eſcap'd; but the fourth time he ſaid, *I will ariſe*, but was ſurprized by his Enemies, and loſt his Strength, and Sight, and Liberty. How juſtly will the wilful neglect of Salvation ſo long, and ſo compaſſionately offer'd to Sinners, render the Divine Mercy inexorable to their Prayers and Tears at laſt? When a Roman Gentleman that was wont to revel in the night, and ſleep in the day, had waſted a great Eſtate by Luxury, he petitioned the Emperor *Tiberius* to relieve his Poverty, and was diſmiſs'd with this upbraiding Anſwer, *Serò experrectus es*; you are riſen too late. He never open'd his Eyes to ſee his Condition till it was paſt Remedy. This is the ſad Caſe of

many that waſte the Seaſons of Grace, and are careleſs of their Duty, till upon the point of periſhing, and then addreſs themſelves to God for his Favour and Pardon, but are juſtly rejected with the reproaches of their obſtinate neglect of Salvation in the time of their Lives. I doubt not that ſome are wonderfully converted and ſaved at laſt; but theſe ſpecial Mercies are like our Saviour's miraculous healing the two blind Perſons as he was paſſing in the way, when great numbers of the Blind remain'd uncur'd. We read a prodigious Story in the Book of *Kings*, that a Captain and his fifty Men commanded *Elias* to come to the King, and immediately a Tempeſt of Lightning deſtroyed them. Now who would think that another Captain with his fifty ſhould be ſo deſperate, that having the Aſhes and Relicks of thoſe miſerable Carcaſſes before their Eyes, as to make the ſame Citation to the Prophet? yet they did, and provok'd the Juſtice of Heaven to conſume them. And this Madneſs is exemplified in thouſands every day; for notwithſtanding they ſee Sinners like themſelves cut off in their evil Ways, they continue unreformed,

as

as if they were fearleſs of Hell, as if reſolved to ſecure their own Damnation.

I would not from what has been repreſented in this Matter ſo univerſally uſeful, diſcourage any that have lived in a courſe of Sin, from earneſt ſeeking to God in their laſt Hours: For even then they are not utterly deſtitute of Hope. The Goſpel ſets forth the Mercy of God to returning Sinners, in various Repreſentations and Expreſſions of admirable Tenderneſs. When the loſt Sheep was recovered, there was Joy, as if a Treaſure had been found. The Prodigal had waſted his Eſtate in Laſciviouſneſs and Luxury, and by a harſh reduction came to himſelf, reflected with ſhame upon his Folly and Rebellion, and the ſenſe of his Miſery (not a more ingenuous or noble Principle at firſt) compell'd him to go to his Father, to try what his Affection would do. And it was not a vain preſumption, for he found the effects of fatherly and compaſſionate Love: *When he was a great way off, his Father ſaw him, and had Compaſſion, and ran and fell on his Neck, and kiſſed him. And the Son ſaid, Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven,*

and in thy ſight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son. But the Father ſaid to his Servants, Bring out the beſt Robes, and put a Ring on his Finger, and Shoes on his Feet; and bring hither the fatted Calf, and kill it; let us eat and be merry, for this my Son was dead, and is alive again, was loſt, and is found. The Deſign of Chriſt was to repreſent his Heavenly Father in that Parable: and to wounded Spirits that feel the intolerable weight of Sin, the Mercy and Mildneſs of the Goſpel is to be exhibited. God is rich in Mercy to all that call upon him in Truth. But to tell Sinners who ſecurely proceed in their ſinful Ways, that they may be ſaved at laſt, and notwithſtanding their preſumptuous Repulſes of God's Calls to his Service, yet think they may come into the Vineyard at the eleventh hour, and be rewarded, is to give countenance and protection to Sin, and to harden them to Deſtruction. Poiſon is not cured by giving Food, but Antidotes, that put Nature into a Paſſion till it be expelled. The Terrors of the Lord can only prove medicinal to ſuch depraved Souls.

To conclude this Argument, let us ſeriouſly conſider the Revelation God has afforded of himſelf in the Goſpel: He is a Father and a Judg; Juſtice and Holineſs as well as Mercy are eſſential to his Nature, that our Affections may be accordingly moved towards him. *If ye call on the Father, who without reſpect of Perſons judgeth according to every Man's Work, paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear.* Preſumption and Deſpair are very diſhonourable to God, and pernicious to the Soul: the one deſtroys the Fear, the other the Love of God. But Hope contemper'd with Fear, has an excellent Influence in the Chriſtian Life. As the Ballaſt and the Wind are both neceſſary, that the Ship may ſail ſafely; without the Wind the Ship can make no way; and without Ballaſt 'tis in danger of overſetting by every Guſt. Thus Hope and Fear are neceſſary to bring us ſafely to Heaven. Fear without Hope chills, and ſtupifies the Vigour and Alacrity of the Soul, that it cannot come to God: and Hope without Fear, makes it vain and careleſs of its Duty, and liable to be overthrown by every pleaſing Temptation. Briefly, let us rightly underſtand the Tenor

of the Evangelical Promiſes of Pardon and Grace: they are conditional and applicable only to penitent Believers. And unfeigned Faith purifies the Heart, works by Love, and is the living Principle of univerſal Obedience. And Repentance unto Life is productive of all good Fruits in their Seaſon. Without Faith and Repentance we can neither be juſtified in this World, nor glorified in the next. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked: as a Man ſows, ſo ſhall he reap. He that ſows to the Fleſh, ſhall of the Fleſh reap Corruption: he that ſows to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap Life everlaſting.*

2. The careful preſerving our ſelves from wilful preſumptuous Sins, is an happy means to render Death comfortable to us. Sins of Ignorance and Infirmity, of ſudden Surreption and Surprize, the beſt Men are not freed from in the preſent State: and being the daily motive of our Grief, and ſerious circumſpection to prevent them, are conſiſtent with the regular Peace of Conſcience, and the Friendſhip and Favour of God. But great Sins in their matter being ſo contrary to natural Conſcience, and ſupernatural Grace, or Sins

pre-

preſumptuous in the manner of their commiſſion, ſuch as proceed from the choice of the perverſe Will againſt the inlightned Mind, whatever the matter or kind of them be, are direct Rebellion againſt God, a deſpiſing of his Command; and provoke his pure Eyes, and make the aſpect of Death fearful. The Spirit ſeals our Pardon and Title to Heaven as the holy Spirit; his Teſtimony, that *we are the Children of God, and Heirs of Glory*, is concurrent with the renewed Conſcience, and diſtinguiſh'd from the ignorant Preſumptions, blind Conjectures, and carnal Security of the Unholy. As the ſanctifying Spirit he diſtinguiſhes true Chriſtians from the loſt World, appropriates them to God, confirms their preſent Intereſt in the Promiſes of the Goſpel, and their future Hopes. Briefly, Grace is the moſt ſenſible effect and ſign of God's ſpecial Favour, the fruit of Election, and the earneſt of Glory: and the Truth of Grace is moſt clearly and certainly made evident by the continual Efficacy of it in the Converſation. The obſervation of our Hearts to ſuppreſs unholy Affections, and of our Senſes to prevent them, a conſtant courſe

of Holineſs in our Lives, (though many Frailties will cleave to the beſt) is uſually rewarded with great Peace here.

God has eſtabliſh'd a connexion between our Obedience and his Comforts. Thoſe that keep themſelves pure from the Defilements of the World, have the white *Stone* promiſed, the bright Jewel of aſſurance of God's pardoning and rewarding Mercy. We read of *Enoch, that he walk'd with God*, was a Star ſhining in a corrupt Age, the tenour of his Life was holy, and he was tranſlated to Heaven without ſeeing Death. Though this was an extraordinary Diſpenſation, yet there is a peculiar Reward analogical to it; for thoſe who walk circumſpectly, they ſhall not ſee Death with its Terrors, but uſually have a holy Chearfulneſs, a peaceful Joy, in their paſſage through the dark Valley to Heaven. But preſumptuous Sins againſt external and internal Reſtraints, the convincing Law of God, and the Directions of Conſcience, (to which even the Saints of God are liable here, as appears by *David*'s earneſt Prayer to be preſerved from them) ſuch Sins grieve the holy Spirit, and wound our Spirits, and, if continued, ſequeſter us from the comfortable

fortable Priviledges of the Goſpel, and render us unfit for the Kingdom of Heaven. And when they are retracted by Repentance, yet there often remains a bitter Remembrance of them: as deep Wounds, though cur'd, yet are felt in change of Weather. And ſometimes a Spring-tide of Doubts and Fears breaks into humble penitent Souls, in the laſt Hours: though Death brings them ſafely, yet not comfortably to Heaven.

3. The zealous Diſcharge of the Duties of our Place and Calling, the Conjunction of our Reſolutions and Endeavours to glorify God, and do good according to our Abilities and Opportunities of Service, ſweetens the Thoughts of Death to us. For the true End and Perfection of Life is the Glory of God, and when with Fidelity it is employed in order to it, *Death* brings us to the bleſſed *Reſt* from our Labours. Our Saviour when he was to leave the World, addreſs'd himſelf to his Father, *I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finiſh'd the Work thou gaveſt me to do. And now, Father, glorify me with thy ſelf, with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was.* A John 17.

Chriſtian

Chriſtian that imitates and honours Chriſt, and with Diligence perſeveres in well-doing, may with an humble Confidence in the Divine Mercy expect the promiſed Reward. The Reflection upon a well-ſpent Life is joyn'd with a joyful Proſpect of God's Favour and Acceptance above. But to the careleſs and remiſs, to thoſe who are wilfully negligent of their Duty, how fearful is Death that ſummons them to give an account of their Talents to the Righteous Lord?

4. A holy Indifference of Affection to preſent things, makes it eaſy to part with them, and Death leſs fearful to us. *David*, though a King, declares he was a Stranger on Earth, not only with reſpect to his tranſient Condition, but his inward Diſpoſition; and that he was *as a weaned Child* from the admired Vanities of the World. *Chryſoſtom* in a Letter to *Ciriacus* who was tenderly ſenſible of his Baniſhment, wrote to him, 'You now begin to la-'ment my Baniſhment, but I have done 'ſo for a long time: for ſince I knew 'that Heaven was my Country, I have 'eſteemed the whole Earth a place 'of Exilement. *Conſtantinople*, from 'whence

'whence I am expell'd, is as diſtant from 'Paradiſe as the Deſert to which they 'ſend me. But when our Affections are 'ſet upon external things, and we are 'irregular in our Aims, intemperate in 'our Uſe, and immoderate in our De-'lights, how ſenſible and cutting is the 'Diviſion from them? How bitter is Death that deprives a carnal Wretch of all the Materials of his frail Felicity? What a Storm of Paſſions is raiſed, to loſe all his good things at once? for 'tis a Rule in Nature, What is poſſeſs'd with tranſporting Joy, is loſt with exceſſive Sorrow. As the Ivy that twines ſo cloſely about the Tree, and is intimately faſtned by ſo many Roots as there are Branches, cannot be pluck'd away without rending the Bark with it; ſo when the World, that was as it were incarnated with the Heart, is taken away, the Heart it ſelf is grievouſly rent by the violent Separation. And the Infelicity of carnal and worldly Perſons is heavily aggravated, in that the Guilt in procuring or abuſing thoſe Treaſures and Delights that they leave here with ſo great Sorrow, will cleave to them, and give Teſtimony againſt them before their Judg. But when

Hæc enim eſt infœlicitas hominum, propter quæ peccant Morientes hic dimittunt, & ipſa peccata ſecum portant. *Aug.*

when the Affections are looſe to the World, and ſet upon Heaven, our leaving the Earth is no Loſs but Gain, and our Separation from the Body of Fleſh is with that Alacrity, as the putting off a vile Garment to be clothed with a Royal Robe. 'Twas the wiſe Counſel of *Tertullian* to the Women of the firſt Ages of the Church, not to value and love the Jewels and Ornaments of Gold, that they might be more ready and reſolved to obtain by Death, Martyrdom, and by Martyrdom, Eternal Glory. And that we may diſentangle our Souls from thoſe voluntary Bands that faſten us to preſent things, we muſt have a ſincere uncorrupted Judgment of their Meanneſs. The Apoſtle exhorts Chriſtians to Moderation in their Temper and Converſation, with reſpect to the Buſineſs and Enjoyments here, that *they who have Wives, be as though they had none; that thoſe that rejoice, be as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not; and they that uſe the World, as not abuſing it; for the faſhion of the World paſſeth away.* To a wiſe and pondering Obſerver, what compariſon is there between Shadows and Dreams, and ſubſtantial everlaſting

Stemus expeditæ ad omnem vim, nihil habentes quod relinquere timeamus; Retinacula iſta ſunt ſpei noſtræ. *De cult. Fœm.*

laſting Bleſſedneſs? If Men had the ſame opinion of this World whilſt they live, as they will have when they are to die, they would not inordinately ſeek it. They who have magnified temporal Honours and Riches, and lived in Pleaſures without Remorſe, yet in their dying Hours, when Men ſpeak with moſt Feeling and leaſt Affectation, how have they vilified thoſe empty Appearances of Happineſs? with what moving Expreſſions declared the Vanity and Brevity of worldly things? As when the *Iſraelites* were to go through the River *Jordan*, that opened it ſelf to make a free and dry Paſſage for them; the lower part of its Waters ran into the Dead Sea, and utterly fail'd: but the Waters that came from above, roſe up and appear'd like a Mountain. Thus when Men come to the univerſal Paſſage, from this to the next Life, inferiour things abſolutely fail, and are loſt in the dead Sea, but the things above, that are eternal, then appear in their true Greatneſs, exceeding all humane Comprehenſion: from hence is the change of Mind and Language concerning the one and other.

Joſh. 3. 16. Ad inſtar montis intumeſcentis, apparebant procul.

5. So-

5. Solemn, affectionate, and frequent Converſe with God in religious Duties, will render Death not fearful to us. The whole Life of a Chriſtian, as ſuch,

1 John 1. 3. is a *continual Communion with the Father, and with Jeſus Chriſt.* For he performs all good Works by Divine *Grace* communicated *from above*, and refers all to the Divine Honour. As in a pair of Compaſſes, one Foot is fix'd in the Center, while the other moves in the Circumference: ſo the Heart of a Chriſtian is in Heaven, his aims are for God, whilſt he is active here in the World. His Natural and Civil Actions are heightened to a ſupernatural End: And thus *his Converſation is in Heaven.* But this was ſpoken of before: and that which is now ſpecified, is the more immediate Service of God in Holy Meditation, Prayer, and the Ordinances of the Goſpel, which is the nobleſt part of the ſpiritual Life.

Our bleſſed Saviour who was a Comprehenſor upon Earth, always ſaw the Face of God, and invariably ſought his Glory in all things, yet had his ſpecial times of Prayer and Heavenly Communion with God, and the moſt glori-

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ous Teſtimonies of his Favour in thoſe times. Our Communion with God here is as true as in Heaven, but the Influence and Fruition is different according to our Capacity. When the Soul feels the vigorous Exerciſe of the Thoughts and Affections upon God, and the raiſed Operations of Grace in Holy Duties, 'tis as certain a Sign of God's Favour and Acceptance, as when Fire deſcended from Heaven to conſume the Sacrifice. And often our affectionate Duties are rewarded with ſenſible Conſolations, and holy Souls are diſmiſs'd from the Throne of Grace, as they ſhall be received at the Throne of Glory, with the reviving Teſtimonies of God's Approbation. Now the Aſſurance of God's Love conquers the Fear of Death.

This Communion muſt be frequent. As Love and Reſpects between Friends are maintained by conſtant Viſits and Letters, and mutual Confidence ariſes from Acquaintance: ſo by the interchange of holy Duties and divine Favours, we preſerve a lively Senſe of God's Love, and an humble Familiarity with his Majeſty, that his Preſence is not a Terror to us. A Chriſtian that

that walks with God here, when he leaves the World, (to uſe the Words of a dying Saint) *changes his Room, but not his Company.* God was always with him on Earth, and he ſhall be ever with God in Heaven.

But cold and ſeldom Converſe begets Strangeneſs, and that makes us ſhy of God. When religious Duties are performed as a complemental Viſit without zealous Affections, or uſed only in times of Affliction and Exigency, as Cordial Waters in ſwooning Fits, the Divine Preſence is uncomfortable to us. They who prefer carnal Sweets before Acquaintance with God, cannot with Peace and Joy think of appearing before him. O how unwelcome is Death to ſuch! *for then the Spirit returns to God that gave it.*

6. Let us ſtrengthen our Belief of the bleſſed State after Death. Divine Truths loſe their Influence and Efficacy when they are not ſtedfaſtly believed.

Heb. 11. 1. *Faith is the ſubſtance of things not ſeen, and the Evidence or Conviction of things hoped for.* The Spirit confirms our Faith, not by a pure Phyſical Act, but by convincing Reaſons of the Truth of the Goſpel. The Life of Chriſt ſo glo-

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rious in Holineſs, his Doctrine ſo becoming the Wiſdom and other excellent Attributes of the Deity, his Miracles ſo great, numerous, open, and beneficial, not meerly to ſurprize the Spectators with Aſtoniſhment, but to touch their Hearts; his Death foretold by the Prophets, and exactly agreeing in all the Circumſtances of the Predictions; his Reſurrection the moſt noble Operation of the Divine Power, are the ſtrongeſt Proofs that what he has reveal'd as the Counſel of God for our Redemption, and the Preparations of Glory for the Saints in Heaven, are divine Truths. And the Efficacy of the Spirit of Chriſt in ſanctifying his Diſciples in all Ages, is a continual and as ſatisfying an Argument that the Goſpel is derived from God the Fountain of Truth, as extraordinary Miracles. For *Holineſs* is as inſeparable a property of the Divine Nature as Omnipotence; and the Sanctification of the Soul as divine an Effect, as the Reſurrection of the Body. Now in the Goſpel God enters into Covenant with obedient Believers, *to be their God*, a Title and Relation, that ſuppoſing them the moſt happy here, all the Enjoyments

of this World cannot fulfil. This Covenant is not diſſolv'd by Death, for he uſes this Stile after the Death of his faithful Servants: and from hence it follows they are Partakers of his Glory and Joys in the next Life. For the Honour of his Veracity is moſt dear to him. The Pſalmiſt declares, that he has *magnified his Word above all his Name.* No Perfections of his Nature are more ſacred and inviolable than his Truth. The Foundations of Nature ſhall be overturn'd, and the moſt ſolid parts of the Creation deſtroyed, but his Promiſes ſhall be compleatly accompliſh'd. We are aſſured by his infallible Authority, that *there remains a Reſt for the People of God.* And *he that receives this Teſtimony, ſets to his Seal that God is true*; honours the Truth of God's Word, and binds himſelf more firmly to his Service, and is encouraged to leave this ſenſible World, for that which is infinitely better. Our Confidence and Patience in well-doing, and in ſuffering the utmoſt Evil to Nature, is from the pregnant Apprehenſions of the Reality of eternal things. *We know*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *if our earthly Tabernacle be diſſolved, we have a Building*

2 Cor. 5. 1.

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ing not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens. This fortified him againſt the Terrors of Death. When *Stephen ſaw the Heavens open, and the Son of God ready to receive him,* with what Courage and Conſtancy did he encounter the bloody Rage of his Murderers? Faith ſupplies the want of Viſion, it pierces the Clouds, opens a Window in Heaven, ſees the Crowns of Righteouſneſs prepared for the Saints, and ſweetens the bittereſt Paſſage to it. But if our Faith be weak and wavering, our Courage will decline in the needful Hour. 'Tis with Chriſtians in their laſt Paſſage from Earth to Heaven, as with Saint *Peter* walking upon the Waters to Chriſt: whilſt his Faith was firm in Chriſt, he went upon the Waves as on the firm Land: but upon the riſing of a Storm, his Faith ſunk into Fear, and he ſunk in the Waters; till our Saviour upon his earneſt Prayer, *Lord, ſave me,* took hold of him, and rais'd him with that compaſſionate Reproof, *O thou of little Faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt?*

The laſt Uſe is, to excite the *Saints* to die with that Courage and Chearfulneſs *as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt.*

The Encouragement of *Joſhua* to the Iſraelites againſt the Giants that terrified them from entring into the Land of *Canaan*, the Type of Heaven, *Be not afraid of them, they are Bread for us*, we ſhall obtain an eaſy Conqueſt over them, is applicable to this purpoſe: Do not fear Death, the Enemy that interpoſes between us and the true *Canaan*; for our Conflict ſhall be the means of our Victory, and triumphant Poſſeſſion of the holy and bleſſed Land above. This is very honourable to our Redeemer, and recommends Godlineſs to the Judgment, Affections, and Practice of others. St. *Baſil* tells of a Cuſtom to annoint the tops of Doves Wings with ſome fragrant Liquor, that mixing in company with other Doves, they might by the Sent allure them to follow to the Dove-houſes. Thus when holy Perſons live and die with peaceful Joy, thoſe that converſe with them, are drawn by that Fragrance of Paradiſe to apply themſelves to ſerious Religion.

Epiſt. Jul.

'Tis the Apoſtle's conſolatory Advice to Believers, *Not to be ſorrowful for thoſe that ſleep in* JESUS, *as thoſe that are without hope.*

1 Theſſ. 4.

When

When *Jacob* ſaw his beloved Son's Coat rent and ſtain'd with Blood, he abandoned himſelf to deſperate Sorrow, and continued mourning for his Death, when *Joſeph* was advanc'd in Authority and Dignity next to *Pharaoh* in the Kingdom of *Egypt*. Thus when we ſee the Garment of Mortality rent by Diſeaſes, we mourn for departed Saints, as if Death had abſolutely deſtroyed them, when their Souls are reigning in Glory. This immoderate Sorrow is an Heatheniſh Paſſion, ſuitable to their ignorance of the future happy State, but very unbecoming the plenary Aſſurance the Goſpel affords us of it. Indeed for the Wicked to die with fears and palpitations of heart, to be ſurrounded with impendent horrours, when ſuch a precipice and depth of Miſery is before them, is very juſt and reaſonable; but for the Saints to die uncomfortably under inordinate Fears, is a diſparagement to the *Bleſſed Hope* eſtabliſh'd upon *the Revelation of Life and Immortality by the Goſpel.*

Now in three things I ſhall propound the Duty of dying Chriſtians.

1. To ſubmit to the Divine Pleaſure with reſigned Spirits, as to the Means,

the Manner, and Time of Death. God has a Sovereign Right and Dominion over us. The preſent Life is his moſt free Favour, and he may juſtly reſume it when he pleaſes. His Will ſhould be the firſt and laſt Rule of ours. Whether he gently untwines the Band of Life, or violently breaks it, we muſt placidly, without reluctation, yield up our ſelves. By what Means ſoever Death comes, all ſecond Cauſes are moved by an impreſſion from above, in what Age of Life ſoever; all our Times are appointed by the divine Counſel: and a Saint ought with that readineſs and meek ſubmiſſion receive it, as if he heard an expreſs Voice from Heaven calling him to God, and ſay in his heart with *Samuel, Here I am, thou didſt call me.* This is the laſt act of our Obedience, and very pleaſing to God. We read of the marvellous * Conſent of *Abraham* and his Son *Iſaac*, the Father to offer up his Son, and the Son his Life, (that were both the Gifts of God) in compliance with the divine Command, and from Heaven he declared his high approbation of it. *This is to make a Vertue of Neceſſity, and turn Nature into Grace.* But diſcontent and reluctancy,

* Ille exerit gladium, ille cervicem, uno voto, unâ devotione: ſub tanto non dicam humanitatis, ſed potius naturæ ipſius metu, lati ſunt.

cy, as if our Lives were our own, and taken from us unjuſtly or unſeaſonably, is Rebellious Unthankfulneſs, unbecoming a Creature, much more a true Chriſtian, who exchanges a periſhing Life for that which is eternal.

2. To receive Death not only with Patience, but earneſt deſires to be with Chriſt. I know Death is naturally unwelcome. Our Saviour tells St. *Peter*, *When thou art old, another ſhall bind thee, and lead thee where thou wouldeſt not*: ſignifying his Martyrdom. The Circumſtance [*when thou art old*] is remarkable, and intimates the natural unwillingneſs to die, when there was little time to live. But his rational ſanctified Will was ſuperiour and prevalent. The univerſal deſire of the Saints is to be happy in the Preſence of God: for the divine Nature communicated to them is intelligent, and inclining towards its chief Good: and if the obtaining it were not by *being unclothed, but clothed upon* by an immediate Tranſlation to Heaven, how willingly would they leave this World? But there is a bitterneſs in Death that makes it unpleaſant; and many holy Souls that deſire the Glorious Liberty in Heaven,

John 21. 41.

Securus à corpore volebat eſſe cum Chriſto, ſed ſi fieri poſſet præter mortis moleſtiam. Nolens ad eam venit, ſed volens eam veit. *Aug.* Tract. 123 in *Joan.*

yet are loth to leave their Priſon. Now there are ſo many Arguments to make the Saints deſirous of dying, that methinks ſince Life is chiefly valued and dear to them, as it is the way to Heaven, when they are come to that bleſſed end, it ſhould not be longer deſirable. What is this lower World that chains us ſo faſt? 'Tis the Devil's Circuit wherein he ranges, ſeeking *whom he may devour*: 'Tis the Theater of Contentions: The Low aſpire to riſe; the Exalted fear to fall: The Poor envy the Rich, and the Rich deſpiſe the Poor. 'Tis a foreign Country to the Saints; and as Pilgrims and Strangers, they are liable to Reproaches, Injuries, and hard Dealings from the Wicked, the Natives of the Earth. What is the preſent momentany Life that ſo enamours us? 'Tis ſurrounded with Temptations, oppreſs'd with Fears, ardent with irregular Deſires, and continually ſpent in Vanity or Vexation. In Adverſity 'tis depreſs'd and melancholy; in Proſperity fooliſh and proud. 'Tis a real Infelicity under the deceitful appearance of Felicity. But above all other Motives, the evil of Sin from which we cannot be clearly exempted here, ſhould render

render Death desirable. The best suffer internal Divisions between *the Law of the Flesh, and the Law of the Mind*; as *Rebecca* felt the Twins, *Esau* and *Jacob*, repugnant in her Womb. How hard is it to be continually watching the Heart that Corruptions do not break out, and the Senses that Temptations do not break in? How difficult to order the Affections, to raise what is drooping, and suppress what is rebellious? For they are like the People of whom the Historian speaks, *qui nec totam servitutem pati possunt, nec totam libertatem.* How many Enemies of our Salvation are lodg'd in our own bosoms? The Falls of the Saints give sad evidence of this. If the Body were unspotted from the World as in the Creation of Man, there might be a just Plea of our unwillingness to part with it, but since it is the incentive and instrument of Sin, we should desire to be dissolved, that we might be perfectly holy. Death is the final Remedy of all the temporal and spiritual Evils to which we are liable here. And the Love of Christ should make us willing to part with all the Endearments of this Life, nay desirous to enter into the

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Celeſtial Paradiſe, though we muſt paſs under the Angels Sword, the ſtroke of Death, to come into his Preſence. He infinitely deſerves our Love, for we owe our Salvation and Eternal Glory to the merit of his Humiliation, and the power of his Exaltation. With what earneſt affections did St. *Paul* deſire *to be diſſolved and to be with Chriſt?* Love gave Wings of Fire to his Soul, ardent deſires mounting to Heaven. How valiant were the Martyrs in expreſſing acts of Love to Chriſt? How boldly did they encounter Death that interpos'd between them and the ſight of his Glory? Their Love was hotter than the Flames that conſumed them. They as willingly left their Bodies, as *Elias* let fall his Mantle to aſcend to Heaven. And how does it upbraid the coldneſs of our Love, that we are ſo contented to be here, abſent from our Saviour. That the Moles of the Earth, who never ſaw the Light of the Sun, and feed on bitter Roots, are pleas'd in their dark Receptacles, is no wonder; but if Birds that are refreſh'd with his chearful Beams, and feed on ſweet Fruits, ſhould willingly be confin'd in Caverns of the Earth, it were un-

Phil. 1.

unnaturally ſtrange. Thus for Pagans, (and thoſe who are ſo in Heart, though different in Profeſſion) that are ſo ſhort-ſighted and depraved, that they only perceive and affect preſent ſenſible things, for them to be unwilling to die is no wonder; for then all that is valuable and delightful to them is loſt for ever: but for thoſe who are inlightned by the Revelation of God ſo clearly concerning the ſtate of Glory, and have taſted the Goodneſs of the Lord, and know the incomparable difference between the mean and frail Felicity here, and the ineſtimable immutable Felicity hereafter, for them to be unwilling to leave this World for that which is infinitely better, is aſtoniſhing. Such was the Love of our Saviour, that his perſonal Glory in Heaven did not fully content him, without the Saints partaking of it with him: *Father, I will that thoſe whom thou haſt given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory.* If our Hearts do not anſwer his, 'tis a ſad indication that we have not an Intereſt in him: for the application of his Merits is always join'd with the imitation of his Vertues, and the reflection of his Love. The Lovers of Chriſt will join

John 17.

Cant. 1. join with the inflamed Spouſe, *Draw us, and we will run after thee:* O looſen our Affections from this World, that we may readily aſcend to thee: they will renew the Sighs of holy *David* in his Baniſhment, *O when ſhall we come and appear before God!*

Laſtly, To die with Thankſgiving and Joy. 'Tis uſual to compare this Life to a Voyage; The Scripture is the Chart that deſcribes the Coaſts we muſt paſs, and the Rocks we muſt avoid; Faith is the Compaſs that directs the Courſe we muſt ſteer; Love is the Rudder that governs the Motion of the Ship; Hope fills the Sails: Now what Paſſenger does not rejoice at the diſcovery of his Country where his Eſtate and Heart is, and more at the near approach to the Port where he is to land? Is not Heaven the Country of the Saints? Is not their Birth from above, and their tendency to their Original? And is not the bleſſed Boſom of Chriſt their Port? O what joyful Thankſgivings are due to God, when by his Spirit and Providence they have happily finiſh'd their Voyage through ſuch † dangerous Seas, and are coming into the Land of the Li-

† Quamdiu in Salo iſto, tamdiu inter naufragia.

Living? How joyful was to *Noah* the coming of the Dove with an Olive-Branch, to ſhew him the Deluge was aſſwaged, and the Time was come of his freedom from the troubleſom company of Animals, and from the ſtraitneſs and darkneſs of the Ark, to go forth and poſſeſs the World? How joyful ſhould Death be to a Saint, that comes like the Dove in the evening, to aſſure him the Deluge of Miſery is ceas'd, and the time is come of his enlargement from the Body, his deliverance from the wretched ſinful Society here, and his poſſeſſing the Divine World? Holy Souls are immediately tranſported by the Angels to Chriſt, and by him preſented to his Father, without *ſpot or wrinkle*, compleat in Holineſs, and prepared for Communion with him in Glory. How joyfully are they received into Heaven by our Saviour and the bleſſed Spirits? they are the reward of his Sufferings, the precious and dear purchaſe of his Blood: The Angels that rejoice at the Converſion of a Sinner, do much more at the Glorification of a Saint: and the *Church of the Firſt-born* who have before us enter'd into Glory, have a new acceſſi-

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on of Joy, when their younger Brethren arrive to the undefiled immortal Inheritance. And is it not very becoming Believers joyfully to aſcend to the Seat of Bleſſedneſs, to the happy Society that inſpires mutual Joys for ever? For our encouragement there are numerous Inſtances of Believers that have with Peace and Joy, though in various degrees, paſt through *the dark Valley to the Inheritance of Light.* Some have died with more Joy than they lived, and triumph'd over the laſt Enemy with the vocal Praiſes of God: others with ſilent Affections have quietly commended their Spirits into his Hand. Some have inward Refreſhings and Support; others exuberant Joys and Raviſhments, as if the Light of Glory ſhined into them, or the Vail of Fleſh were drawn, and their Spirits were preſent with the inviſible World. Some of the Martyrs in their cruelleſt Sufferings felt ſuch impreſſions of Confidence and Alacrity, that as in the Houſe of *Lamech* there was accorded at the ſame time two diſcordant Callings by the two Brothers; Jubal *the Inventer of the Harp and Organ, and* Tubal-Cain *the firſt Artificer in Braſs and Iron:* the

Accius ſum ad id miraculi, videre exultantem in morte hominem, & inſultantem morti. *Bern.* 26 Serm. in *Cant.*

Gen. 4.

the one practiſed on Inſtruments of Muſick, breathing harmonious Sounds and Melodies; the other uſed Hammers and Anvils, making noiſe and tumult: So in ſome Perſons, whilſt the heavieſt Strokes fell on their Bodies, their Souls were raviſh'd with the ſweeteſt Joy and Exultation. Indeed 'tis not thus always with the Saints: for though *Sin* be pardoned, yet the apprehenſions of Guilt may remain. When a Stream is diſturbed, it does not truly repreſent the Object: When the Affections are diſordered, the Mind does not judg aright of a Chriſtian's State. A *Serpent* may hiſs when it has loſt its Sting. Death may terrify when it cannot hurt us. I doubt not but ſome excellent Saints have been in anxieties to the laſt, till their Fears were diſpell'd by the actual fruition of Bleſſedneſs. As the *Sun* ſometimes ſets in dark Clouds, and riſes in a glorious *Horizon*. We read our Evidences for Heaven by the Light of God's Countenance: his Image is made viſible in our Souls by the illuſtration of his Spirit: and he exerciſes Prerogative in the diſpenſation of his Comforts. 'Tis his pleaſure to beſtow

beſtow extraordinary Favours on ſome, and deny them to others that are as holy. But every penitent Believer has juſt cauſe of Joy in Death: for Jeſus Chriſt has reconciled God, deſtroyed Satan, and conquered Death: and the laſt Day of his Life is the firſt of his Glory.

FINIS.

OF

OF ETERNAL JUDGMENT.

BY

WILLIAM BATES, D.D.

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OF
Eternal Judgment.

Acts 17. 31. *Becauſe he hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judg the World in Righteouſneſs, by that Man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given Aſſurance unto all Men, in that he raiſed him from the dead.*

SAint *Paul* had this Title of Honour eminently conferred upon him, the Apoſtle of the Gentiles: This Office he performed with perſevering Diligence, diffuſing *the Light of Life to thoſe that ſate in Darkneſs, and*

in the Shadow of Death. In this Chapter we have recorded the Subſtance of his Sermon to the *Athenians*; wherein his admirable Zeal and Prudence are remarkable, in the matter and order of his Diſcourſe, to convince and perſwade them to recive the ſaving Truth of the Goſpel. He firſt lays down the Principles of natural Religion, to prepare them for the more eaſy Belief of ſupernatural revealed Religion. The Depravation of the Minds of Men was in no Inſtance more prodigious than in their vilifying Conceits of the Deity: They attributed his Name and Honour to various Idols, and aſcribed to him their own Figure, and which was infinitely more unworthy and diſhonourable, their own Paſſions and Vices. They adored their own vain Imaginations. The Idols of their Hearts were erected on their Altars. *Venus* was a Goddeſs, becauſe impure Love reigned in their Breſts. *Bacchus* had religious Rites, becauſe ſenſual Pleaſures, as ſweet as Wine, intoxicated their Spirits. Theſe Errors, as groſs as impious, were univerſal: the Philoſophers themſelves were not exempted from the Contagion. The Apoſtle therefore makes uſe

of

of the cleareſt Arguments, to give Authority to the plain conſpiring Voice of Nature, that had ſo long in vain recall'd them from Idolatry to the Worſhip of the only true God. He therefore declares, that the Divine Maker of all things, *the Father of Spirits,* Ver. 25. *could not be repreſented by corporeal and corruptible things,* but was to be acknowledg'd and ador'd in a manner becoming his ſpiritual and infinite Perfections. That *he made all Nations of* Ver. 26. *one Blood,* though diſtinguiſh'd in their Habitations and Times, that they might ſeek and ſerve the one univerſal Creator. And though the Pagan World for many Ages had lived in an unnatural Oblivion of God, and he ſeem'd unconcerned for their Violation of his Laws, yet it was not from the defect of Juſtice, but the Direction of his Wiſdom, that his Patience was ſo long extended to them. And this he proves by the new and moſt expreſs Declaration of his Will: *But now he commanded all Men every where to repent; becauſe he hath appointed a Day, in which he will judg the World in Righteouſneſs, by the Man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given Aſſurance to*

all Men, in that he raiſed him from the Dead.

In the Words, the Eternal Counſels of God are revealed in two great things.

1. The determining a time wherein he will righteouſly judg the World: *He hath appointed a Day.*

2. The Deſignation of the Perſon by whom he will perform that eminent part of Soveraignty: *by Jeſus Chriſt, whom he hath raiſed from the dead.*

In order to the handling of the main Point, it is requiſite to premiſe briefly ſome Propoſitions.

1. That God is the Univerſal Monarch of the World, and has ſupreme Authority to govern reaſonable Creatures, antecedent to their Election and Conſent. The Pſalmiſt calls to the Heathens, *Know ye that the Lord is God:* that is, the moſt glorious Being, and abſolute Sovereign; *for it is he that made us, and not we our ſelves.* He formed all things by his Almighty Goodneſs, and is King by Creation.

Pſal. 100.

2. The two principal and neceſſary parts of his Soveraignty are, to give

Laws

Laws for the ruling of his Subjects, and to paſs final Judgment upon them for their Obedience or Diſconformity to his Precepts. Mere natural Agents are regulated by a wiſe Eſtabliſhment, that is the Law of their Creation. The Sun and Stars are moved according to the juſt Points of their Compaſs. The Angels are under a Law in Heaven, *and obey his Commandments.* The Humane Nature of Chriſt, though advanced to the higheſt capacity of a Creature, *yet received a Law.* And his whole Work upon Earth for our Salvation, was an Act of Obedience to the Will of God. If a Prince out of affection to his Friend will leave his own Dominions, and live privately with him in a foreign Country, he muſt be ſubject to the Laws of that Place. Indeed it is not conceivable that a Creature ſhould be without a Law; for this is to make it ſupreme and independent: Supreme, in not being liable to a ſuperior Power to confine and order it; Independent, as to its Being and Operations; for Dependance neceſſarily infers Subjection. There is a viſible connexion between thoſe Titles; *The Lord is our Judg, the Lord is our Law-giver, the* Iſa. 33. 22.

Lord is our King. And ſometimes in Scripture his Soveraignty is intimated in the Title of Judg: thus in that humble Expoſtulation of *Abraham* for *Sodom*; *Shall not the Judg of all the World do right?* He addreſſes his Requeſt to God under that Title, to ſoften his Power, and incline his Clemency to ſave the Wicked for their ſakes who were comparatively Righteous, that is, innocent *of their crying Sins.*

3. As his right to govern and judg the World is natural, ſo are his Attributes, his Wiſdom, Holineſs, Juſtice and Power, that qualify and render him moſt worthy to exerciſe this Government. Theſe are finite ſeparable Qualities in Angels or Men, but eſſential Perfections to the Deity. 'Tis more rational to conceive that things may be congeal'd by the heat of Fire, or turn'd black by whiteneſs, than that the leaſt act of Injuſtice can be done by the righteous Lord. The Apoſtle rejects with extreme deteſtation, the blaſphemous Charge of Unrighteouſneſs in God's Proceedings: *Is God unrighteous that taketh Vengeance? God forbid: For then how ſhall God judg the World?* He may as ſoon renounce his Nature, and ceaſe

Rom. 3. 5, 6.

to

to be God, for as ſuch he is neceſſarily Judg of the World, as violate his own Perfections in his judicial proceedings with us.

4. God being inviſible in his own Nature, hath moſt wiſely ordained the laſt Judgment of the World to be tranſacted by a viſible Perſon: becauſe Men are to be judged, and the whole proceſs of Judgment with them, will be for things done in the Body. The Perſon appointed for this Great Work, is Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God united to the Humane Nature. *The Father judgeth no Man:* Not as if he deſcended from the Throne, and deveſted himſelf of his Supremacy, but not immediately; *but hath committed all Judgment to the Son.* And it follows, *As the Father hath Life in himſelf, ſo hath he given to the Son to have Life in himſelf: And hath given him Authority to execute Judgment alſo, becauſe he is the Son of Man*; that is, in the quality of Mediator, for the reward of his Sufferings. The quality of this Office requires no leſs Perſon for the diſcharge of it, than the Son of God. John 5. 22. Ver. 26, 27.

1. Upon the account of its ſuperlative Dignity. No mere Creature is capa-

capable of ſuch a glorious Commiſſion. To paſs a Sovereign Sentence upon Angels and Men, is a Royalty reſerv'd for God himſelf. We read that *no Man in Heaven or Earth was able to open the Sealed Book of his Eternal Counſels, as unſearchable as deep:* only Jeſus Chriſt who was in the *Boſom of the Father*, the Seat of his Counſels and Compaſſions, and was acquainted with all his Glorious Secrets, could unfold the Order of the Divine Decrees about the Church. And if no Creature was worthy to be admitted into God's Counſel, much leſs to be taken into his Throne. The Eternal Son, *the expreſs Image of his Perſon*, is alone fit to be his authoriſed Repreſentative in Judgment. Our Saviour declares, that the Father inveſted the Son with this Regal Power, that *all Men ſhould honour the Son*, with the ſame religious Reverence, and ſupreme Adoration, *as they honour the Father.*

Rev. 5.

John 5. 23.

2. Upon the account of the immenſe Difficulty, no mere Creature is able to diſcharge it. To judg the World, includes two things: 1. To paſs a righteous and irrevocable Judgment upon Men for all Things done in this Life. 2. The

2. The actual execution of the Sentence. And for this no leſs than infinite Wiſdom, and infinite Power are neceſſary. If a ſelect number of Angels of the higheſt Order were deputed, yet they could not manage the judicial Trial of one Man: For beſides the innumerable Acts and Omiſſions in one Life, the Secrets of the Heart, from whence the guilt or goodneſs of Moral Actions is principally derived, are not open to them. He alone that diſcerns all Things, can require an account of all.

3. The Son of Man is inveſted with this high Office as the Reward of his Sufferings. We muſt diſtinguiſh between the eſſential and oeconomical Power of Chriſt. The Son of God, conſidered in his Divine Nature, has an original Power of Judgment equal with the Father; but conſidered as Mediator, has a Power by delegation. In the quality of the Son of Man, he is inferior in Dignity to the Father. The Apoſtle declares this in that ſcale of Subordination, of the Creatures to Believers, and of Believers to Chriſt, and of Chriſt to God. *All things are yours, and you are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's.*

And

And obſerving the beautiful Order that ariſes from the ſuperiority and dependance between Things, he ſaith, *The Head of every Man is Chriſt, and the Head of the Woman is the Man, and the Head of Chriſt is God.* Now this Power by Commiſſion was conferr'd upon him as the Reward of his Sufferings. The Apoſtle expreſly declares it, that Chriſt *being in the Form of God*, and without any uſurpation truly equal to him in Divine Perfections and Majeſty, *humbled himſelf, and became obedient to the Death of the Croſs. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name above every Name: that at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhould bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth; and that every Tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.* His victorious Sufferings are the Titles to his Triumphs; his being ſo ignominiouſly depreſs'd and condemn'd by Men, is the juſt reaſon of his advancement to judg the World.

5. There is a Day appointed wherein the Son of Man will appear in ſenſible Glory, and exerciſe his judicial Power upon Angels and Men. He is now

ſeated

ſeated at the right Hand of the Majeſty on High, and the Celeſtial Spheres are under his Feet: Univerſal Nature feels the power of his Scepter: He reigns in the Hearts of the Saints by his Word and Spirit, and reſtrains the Fury of his Enemies in what degrees he pleaſes: but ſtill his Servants are in diſtreſs, and his rebellious Enemies inſolently break his Laws; and the Curtains of Heaven conceal his Glory from us: therefore a Time is prefix'd, when in the face of the World he will make an eternal difference by Rewards and Puniſhments between the Righteous and the Wicked, and his Government ſhall have its compleat and glorious Iſſue. This is ſtiled the *Judgment of the Great Day.*

1. With reſpect to the appearance of the Judg. When the Law was given from Mount *Sinai*, the Mountain was covered with Fire, and the Voice of God as loud as Thunder proclaimed it from the midſt of the Flames, ſo that the whole Army of the *Iſraelites* was proſtrate on the Plain, ſtruck with a ſacred Horror, and almoſt dead at the amazing Sights and Sounds. From hence 'tis ſaid, that *in his right Hand was a fiery Law.* And if the Law-giver appear'd

appear'd in ſuch terrible Majeſty at the proclaiming the Law, how much more when he ſhall come to revenge the Tranſgreſſions of it? 'Tis ſet forth in Scripture in the moſt lofty and magnificent Expreſſions: *He ſhall come in his Father's Glory, and his own Glory, and the Glory of the Angels.* Luke 9. 26. A devouring Fire ſhall go before him, to conſume all the Works of the Univerſe. He ſhall deſcend from the higheſt Heavens, glorious in the attendance of innumerable Angels, but more in his own Majeſty, and ſit on a *radiant Throne high above all.*

2. 'Tis great, with reſpect to the appearance of thoſe who are to be judg'd: All the Apoſtate Angels, and the univerſal Progeny of *Adam.* The bowels of the Earth, and the bottom of the Sea, and all the Elements ſhall give up the Dead. The mighty Angels, the winged Miniſters of Juſtice, ſhall fly to all Parts, and attach the Wicked to bring them as miſerable Priſoners before that high Tribunal. And thoſe bleſſed powerful Spirits ſhall congregate the Righteous, to preſent them at his right Hand.

3. 'Tis

3. 'Tis great with reſpect to what ſhall be then done: He ſhall perform the moſt glorious and conſummate act of his Regal Office, after a righteous Trial pronounce Judgment, upon which the eternal Deſtiny of the World depends. And immediately the Saints ſhall aſcend with him to the everlaſting Manſions of Glory, and the Wicked ſhall be ſwallowed up in the fiery Gulph for ever.

To define the particular Time when this ſhall be accompliſh'd, is beyond the knowledg of the Angels of higheſt Dignity. 'Tis *inter Arcana Imperii*, among the Secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven. 'Tis obſervable that God has revealed the Times preciſely wherein ſome great Events ſhould come to paſs: after how many Years the *Iſraelites* ſhould be freed from Egyptian Bondage: after what ſpace of Time they ſhould be reſtored from the Captivity of *Babylon*: when the *Meſſiah* ſhould die for the expiation of Sin: but there is no deſignation by certain Characters of the particular Day, nor Year, nor Age, in any Prophecy, of our Saviour's coming to Judgment. And of this an Account may be given. The ſpecial

End

End of thoſe Predictions was, that thoſe who lived to ſee their accompliſhment, notwithſtanding the ſeeming Impoſſibilities, might believe the Truth and Power of God to fulfil the Revelation of his Purpoſes for the Time to come. But at the laſt Day, all the Promiſes and Threatnings will be fulfilled, nothing will remain to be the Object of Faith; and conſequently it was ſuperfluous to declare the certain Time, ſince the exact accompliſhment of it according to the Prediction, will neither be uſeful to confirm Believers, or convert Infidels.

Laſtly, The Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt is the moſt convincing and commanding Evidence of this Doctrine, that he ſhall judg the World. For he was charged with Blaſphemy deſerving of Death for this Teſtimony: *I ſay unto you, hereafter ſhall you ſee the Son of Man ſitting on the right Hand of Power, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven.* Mat. 26. 64, 63. He dedicated Martyrdom in his own Sufferings. Now God in raiſing him from the Dead, confirmed the Truth of his Teſtimony by that viſible Miracle, and the belief of it converted the World to Chriſtianity.

I will now proceed to illuſtrate and prove the main Point, which is this:

That God will judg the World in Righteouſneſs by Jeſus Chriſt.

The Mediator, who ſhall be Judg in the Union of both Natures, conſidered as the Son of God, is eſſentially Holy and Righteous; and conſidered as the Son of Man, was *holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from Sinners.* In him all Vertues ſhin'd in their abſolute Purity: and who is ſo worthy and qualified to reward Holineſs and puniſh Wickedneſs, as *the holy One of God?* 'Tis ſaid of him, *Thou haſt loved Righteouſneſs, and hated Iniquity, therefore thy God hath anointed thee with Oil of gladneſs above thy Fellows:* Conſecrated him to the Regal Office, and enrich'd his humane Nature with Endowments ſuitable to it. 'Twas propheſied of him, *The Spirit of the Lord ſhall reſt upon him, the Spirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding, the Spirit of Counſel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledg, and of the Fear of the Lord; and ſhall make him of quick underſtanding in the Fear of the* Heb. 1. [Iſa. 11. 2,3,4.]

Lord, and He ſhall not judg after the ſight of his Eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his Ears. But with Righteouſneſs ſhall he judg the Poor, and reprove with Equity. Humane Judgments are often unrighteous from vicious Reſpects and Affections that pervert the Will, or fair appearances that deceive the Underſtanding: by Gifts or Guile, Innocence is caſt, and Guilt acquitted: but the Judg of the World is inflexible to Partiality, and all things *are entirely open to his ſight.* In the Act of Judgment he is repreſented *ſitting on a white Throne*, the Emblem of unſpotted Holineſs.

Rev. 20. 11.

The Righteouſneſs of God's Judicial Proceedings will appear by conſidering three Things.

I. The Equity of his Law, the Rule of the great and final Judgment.

II. The Evidence of the Facts and Matter, which ſhall be produc'd as the Reaſon of the Judgment.

III. The Impartiality of the Sentence.

I. The

I. The Equity of the Law which ſhall be the Rule of the laſt Judgment. This will appear by conſidering the Law of Nature, and the Law of Faith, in their Precepts and Penalties, annex'd to enforce the Obſervation of them.

1. The Law of Nature, which is the Rule of Mans Duty, will be the Rule of Judgment: for *without the Law there is no Tranſgreſſion*; and conſequently a Perſon is unaccountable for his Actions. This Law is compoſed of ſuch Rules as are moſt becoming the wiſe and gracious Creator to give, and the reaſonable Creature to receive and obey: for they entirely agree and concenter in his Glory and the Good of his Subjects. The Apoſtle adorns the Law with the moſt excellent Elogy, *'tis Holy, Juſt, and Good. Holy*, as it enjoins all Acts of Piety to God: the adoration of his Majeſty reſulting from his inexpreſſible Divine Perfections, the imitation of his Purity, a reliance on his Goodneſs, a reſignation to his moſt wiſe Providence, and a dutiful obedience to his Will. Such a ſenſe of our dependance and ſubjection to God, is the proper Character Rom. 7. 12.

of the reaſonable Creature, as dignified above inanimate and mere ſenſitive Beings. *The Law is juſt*, as it directs us how to demean our ſelves in our various Relations. Juſtice is the Cement of Societies, without which they diſband and fall into Confuſion. And the Sum of the Law is virtually comprized in one Rule, *to do to others as we would they ſhould do to us*, than which nothing is more equal. 'Tis *good* to Man that keeps it, commanding nothing but what is influential upon his Well-being here and for ever. It does not infringe his true Freedom, but allows him unſtain'd Delights, and enjoins what is proper to advance and ſecure his Dignity, Felicity and Perfection. It forbids every thing that defiles and debaſes him, and cauſes a degeneration from his native Excellency. If we preſcind in our thoughts the ſacred Authority of the Law-giver, all the Precepts of the Law for their moral Goodneſs, deſerve our eſteem and choice, and entire obſervation. The ſanctified Mind approves them univer-

Pſal. 119. 128. ſally. *I eſteem all thy Precepts concerning all things to be right*, ſaith holy *David*. Nay, in the Wicked there is an intel-

intellectual aſſent to the Goodneſs of the Law, though the corrupt Will doth not embrace it: there are ſome Inclinations and Wiſhes to obey it, but controul'd by vicious Deſires. 'Tis ſaid of the convinced Sinner, *Thou knoweſt his Will, and approveſt the things that are more excellent.* Rom. 2. 18.

It may be objected, That the Law being pure, and Man in a frail ſtate, ſurrounded with innumerable Temptations, to require perfect Obedience from him, and condemn him for his Failings, ſeems hard. The Law lays a reſtraint upon all the Senſes, and forbids all fleſhly Luſts: this may be eaſy to ſeparate Souls, but for Men to live in the Body, as if they were out of it, to be always vigilant againſt the inſinuations or attacks of Sin, is impoſſible. Thus the Carnal Mind is apt with ſome colour, to traduce the Righteouſneſs of God's Government. But it will be clearly vindicated, by conſidering;

(1.) The Law ſuppoſes Man in a ſtate of integrity, furniſh'd with ſufficient Power to comply with every Precept, though free to fall from his Duty and Happineſs. To command abſolute Impoſſibilities, is tyrannical, and utter-

ly inconſiſtent with the Nature of the Bleſſed God.

(2.) The firſt Man wilfully tranſgreſs'd the Law, and loſt his Holineſs: And Nature being poiſon'd in the Fountain, is corrupt in all the deſcendants from him. Mankind was juſtly degraded in rebellious *Adam*, and is deſtitute of ſpiritual Strength to perform all that the Law requires.

(3.) This diſability is vicious and culpable, and can be no pretence againſt the Rights of the Law-giver. A natural diſability from the want of requiſite Faculties is a juſt excuſe. 'Tis no Fault that a Man cannot ſtop the Sun, as *Joſhua* did; nor calm a Tempeſt, as our Saviour did by his Word. But the diſability that ariſes from a depraved diſpoſition, renders a Perſon more guilty. And this is the preſent Caſe. The Will of Man is diſobedient and perverſe, and as ſoon as it can exerciſe Election, chooſes Evil; and by cuſtom in Sin becomes more hardened and obſtinate. And from hence the Prophet charges the contumacious Jews; *Behold* Jer. 6. 10. *their Ear is uncircumciſed, and they cannot hearken.* Were they uncapable of hearing the Divine Commands? No; *but*

but the Word of the Lord was to them a Reproach, they had no delight in it. And our Saviour upbraids the Phariſees, *How can ye believe, which receive Honour one of another, and ſeek not the Honour that comes from God only?* They were in high reputation for their *Holineſs*, which made it impoſſible for them in an humble penitent manner to ſubmit to our Saviour. In ſhort, the primary end of the Law was the Happineſs of Man in the performance of his Duty; and his firſt Sin, and conſequent Impotence to fulfil it, was by his own fault. As the Obliquity of a Line cannot be aſcrib'd to the ſtrait Rule, but to the Error of the Hand that draws it. And from hence 'tis clear, that if God ſhould with a terrible exactneſs require of Men unſinning Obedience upon the pain of Damnation, he could not be tax'd with Unrighteouſneſs. John 5. 44.

2. But God has been pleaſed to mitigate and allay the Severity of the Law by the Goſpel; ſo that although the leaſt breach of it makes a Perſon an Offender and obnoxious to Judgment, yet the Law of Faith propounds ſuch merciful Conditions to the Guilty, that upon the performance of them, they

may plead their Pardon ſeal'd with the Blood of their Redeemer, and ſhall be ſaved and crown'd in the Day of Judgment. We are commanded *ſo to ſpeak*
James 2. 12. *and do, as they that ſhall be judged by the Law of Liberty.* Thus the Goſpel is ſtiled, in that it frees the Conſcience, though not from the Obedience, yet from the Terrors and Condemnation of the Law; for there was not the leaſt ſignification of Mercy by it. But in the Goſpel, *the Grace of God moſt illuſtriouſly appears.*

(1.) In that when our Innocence was loſt, there may be a renovation of the Sinner by Repentance: to which the plenary Pardon of Sin is aſſured,
Iſa. 1. 16, 17, 18 *Waſh ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your Doings from before mine Eyes: Ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do well, ſaith the Lord: and though your Sins be as Scarlet, they ſhall be white as Snow; though they be red like Crimſon, they ſhall be white like Wooll.* God will not pardon thoſe who forgive and flatter themſelves in their Sins; *but thoſe who confeſs and forſake them, ſhall find Mercy.*

(2.) Sincerity of Obedience is accepted where Perfection is wanting. When a Perſon with conſent of Heart and ſe-

rious

rious Endeavours ſtrives to obey the holy Will of God, without the exception of any known Duty, or the indulgence of any Sin, *God will ſpare him, as a Father ſpares his Son that ſerves him.* Mal. 3. 17. 'Tis not ſo much the Matter as the Allowance that makes Sin deadly. Where there is guile in the Heart, it will be ſeverely imputed. 'Tis not according to ſome particular Acts of Sin, but the Tenor of the Life, that the ſtate of Men will be decided.

(3.) Unfeigned Faith in the Lord Jeſus, that is, ſuch a belief of the Truth and Goodneſs of his Promiſes, as induces us *to receive him as our Prince and Saviour*, as purifies the Conſcience, the Heart and Life, will free us from Hell, and entitle us to Heaven, according to the Covenant of Grace. In ſhort, the final Reſolution of a Man's Trial and Caſe will be this; either he has performed the gracious Conditions of the Goſpel, and he ſhall *be ſaved*; or rejected them, and he ſhall *be damned.*

If it be objected, that the Terms of Evangelical Juſtification, though in themſelves comparatively eaſy, yet are of impoſſible performance to Men in their natural ſinful State. The Anſwer is clear; 1. That

1. That although the *natural Man be dead in Sin,* without ſpiritual ſtrength to reſolve and perform his Duty, and holy heat of deſires to it; and nothing is alive in him but his corrupt Paſſions, that are like Worms generated in a Carcaſs; yet by the Grace that is offered in the Goſpel, he may be enabled to perform the Conditions of it: for in this the Goſpel excels the Law, the Law diſcovers Sin, but affords no degrees of ſupernatural Power to ſubdue it, and directs to no Means for the expiation of its Guilt. As *the Fire in the Buſh* diſcovered the Thorns without conſuming them. But the ſanctifying
2 Tim. 1. 7. Spirit, the true Spring of *Life and Power,* is the concomitant of the Goſpel, as St. *Peter* declares, *With the preaching of*
1 Pet. 1. 12. *the Goſpel the Holy Ghoſt was ſent down from Heaven.* And the Spirit by illuminating, preventing, and exciting Grace, aſſiſts Men to repent and believe; and is promiſed in rich and liberal Supplies to all that humbly and ardently pray for it. This our Saviour aſſures to us by a moſt tender and endearing Compariſon: *If ye that are e-*
Luke 11. 13. *vil, know how to give good things to your Children; how much more ſhall your Heavenly*

venly Father give the Holy Spirit to thoſe that ask it?

2. From hence it follows, that 'tis from the perverſeneſs of the Will, and the love of Sin, that Men do not obey the Goſpel. For the Holy Spirit never withdraws his gracious aſſiſtance, till *reſiſted, grieved,* and *quenched by them.* It will be no excuſe, that Divine Grace is not conferr'd in the ſame eminent degree upon ſome as upon others that are converted: for the Impenitent ſhall not be condemned for want of that ſingular powerful Grace that was the Priviledg of the Elect, but for *receiving in vain* that meaſure of common Grace that they had. If he that received *one Talent* had faithfully improved it, he had been rewarded with more, but upon the ſlothful and ingrateful neglect of his Duty, he was juſtly deprived of it, and caſt into a Dungeon of Horror, the Emblem of Hell. The Sentence of the Law has its full force upon impenitent Sinners, with intolerable aggravations for neglecting the Salvation of the Goſpel.

Concerning the Heathens, the Scripture declares,

1*ſt.*

1*ſt*. That although the Law publiſh'd by *Moſes* was not communicated to them, yet there was a ſilent, though leſs perfect Impreſſion of it in their Hearts. The Law of Nature in the fundamental Precepts of Religion, and Society, and Temperance, was better known than obeyed by them. There-
Rom. 1.26,27. fore the Apoſtle endites them for atrocious Crimes, ſuch as natural Conſcience conſenting with the Law of God, ſeverely forbids upon the pain of Dam-
Rom. 1. 32. nation. Thus 'tis ſaid of the Heathens, *Who knowing the Judgment of God, that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of Death; not only commit the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do them.* And
Rom. 2. at the laſt Day, *As many as have ſinned without the Law, as delivered to the Jews, ſhall be judged and periſh, not according to that Law of* Moſes, but the Law of Nature that obliged them to do Good, and reſtrain themſelves from Evil; of which the counterpart was not totally deleted in their Hearts.

2*dly*. Although the Revelation of Chriſt in his Perſon, Office and Benefits, is not by the preaching of the Goſpel (that is neceſſary for the *begetting of Faith*) extended to all Nations; yet

yet the Grace of the Redeemer is ſo far univerſal, that upon his account the indulgent Providence of God invited the Heathens to Repentance. His renewed Benefits that ſweetned their Lives, and his powerful Patience in forbearing ſo long to cut them off, when their Impurities and Impieties were ſo provoking, was a Teſtimony of his inclination to Clemency upon their Reformation. And for their abuſing his Favours, and reſiſting the methods of his Goodneſs, they will be inexcuſable to themſelves, and their Condemnation righteous to their own Conſciences.

Rom. 2. 4.

Acts 14. 17.

We are next to conſider the Sanction of the Law that enforces Obedience; and it will appear that God is not extream, but wiſely and juſtly ordained Eternal Death to be the puniſhment of Sin.

This will appear by conſidering,

1. The end of the Sanction is to preſerve the Authority of the Law in its full vigour, to render it moſt ſolemn and awful; and conſequently 'tis the wiſdom of the Law-giver, to ordain a Puniſhment ſo heavy, as to overpoiſe all

all Temptations that might otherwiſe induce the Subjects to tranſgreſs its Precepts.

Therefore to *Adam*, the firſt and ſecond Death was threatned upon his Diſobedience; and Fear, as a Sentinel, was planted in his Breaſt, that no guilty Thought, no irregular Deſire, no deceitful Suggeſtion ſhould enter to break the Tables of the Law depoſited therein. Now ſince, notwithſtanding the threatning, Man was ſo eaſily ſeduced by the inſinuations of the Tempter to break the Law, and diſorder the Government of God in the World, 'tis evident that ſuch a Reſtraint was not over-rigorous to ſecure his Obedience. I ſhall not inſiſt on what is ſadly viſible ſince the firſt Apoſtacy, that there is in Mankind ſuch a prodigious propenſity to ſenſual things, that without the fear of Hell, no Arguments are ſtrong enough to prevent the bold violation of the Divine Law.

---Adſit Regula peccatis, quæ pœnas irroget æquas. *Horat.*

2. 'Tis conſented to by common Reaſon, that there ought to be a proportion between the quality of the Offence, and the degrees of the Puniſhment. Juſtice takes the Scales into its hand before it takes the Sword. Now Sin

Sin againſt God is of ſuch an immenſe Guilt, that an eternal Puniſhment is but equivalent to it. This will appear by conſidering,

(1.) The Perfections of the Law-giver, who is infinitely above us. One Act of Sin is Rebellion againſt God, and includes in it the contempt of his Majeſty, before whom the higheſt Angels *cover their Faces* with Reverence and Adoration, as unworthy to behold his Glory; and *cover their Feet*, as unworthy that he ſhould behold them: the contradiction of his Holineſs that is his peculiar Glory: the denial of his Omniſcience and Omnipreſence, as if he were confin'd to the ſuperior World, and buſy in regulating the harmonious Order of the Stars, and did not diſcern and obſerve what is done below: the defiance of his Eternal Power, and *provoking him to Jealouſy, as if we were ſtronger than he.*

Iſa. 6. 2, 3.

Job 22. 14.

(2.) If we conſider the Obligations of the reaſonable Creatures to obey his Commands, the guilt of Sin riſes prodigiouſly. They were made by his Power, with this ſpecial character of Excellency, according to his Image: they were happy in his Love: they were

were endowed with intellectual Faculties capable to understand and consider their Obligations to their bountiful Lord. From hence it appears that Sin is the most unnatural Rebellion against God, and in it there is a concurrence of Impiety, Ingratitude, Perfidiousness, and whatever may inhance a Crime to an excess of Wickedness.

(3.) The meanness of the Motives that induce Men to prefer the pleasing their depraved Appetites before Obedience to his sacred Will, extreamly aggravates the Offence. Of this we have a convincing Instance in the first Sin committed upon Earth. Deceitful Curiosity, flattering Pride, a secret pleasure of acting according to his Will, join'd with the low attractives of Sense, blinded and transported *Adam* to eat the Mortal Fruit, against the express Command of God. And ever since, the vanishing shadows of Honour, or Gain, or Pleasure, are the only perswasives to Sin. And what can be more provoking, than for a Trifle to transgress the Law of God, and equally despise his Favour and Displeasure? Can any Punishment less than Eternal, expiate such Impieties? The Rules of Hu-

Humane Juſtice may diſcover to us the Equity of the Divine Juſtice. 'Tis ordained by the wiſeſt States, that many Crimes which may be done in a few minutes, ſhall be puniſh'd with Death, and the Offender be deprived of his natural Life for ever. And is it not moſt juſt, that Treaſon againſt the *Great and Immortal King*, ſhould be revenged with Everlaſting Death?

(4.) That which farther clears the Divine Juſtice in puniſhing Sin with Hell, is this, That God by his infallible Promiſe aſſures us, that all who ſincerely and uniformly obey him, ſhall be rewarded with Heaven for ever: a Bleſſedneſs moſt worthy the Greatneſs and Love of the Eternal God to beſtow upon his Servants: a Bleſſedneſs that ſurpaſſes our moſt comprehenſive Thoughts. Now if Everlaſting Glory be deſpiſed, what remains but endleſs Miſery to be the Sinner's Portion? The Conſequence is remedileſs. If Sin with an eternal Hell in its Retinue be choſen and embrac'd, is it not equal that the rational Creature ſhould inherit his own choice? How juſt is it that thoſe who are the Slaves of the Devil, and maintain his Party here, ſhould

have their Recompence with him for ever? That thoſe who *now ſay to the Almighty, Depart from us, we deſire not the knowledg of thy Ways*, ſhould hear the dreadful *Depart from me into everlaſting Fire?* As there will be no vain-boaſting in Heaven, where the Reward is the Gift of pure Bounty; ſo there will be no righteous Complaint againſt God in Hell, where the Puniſhment is inflicted by powerful Juſtice. He that voluntarily ſins, by conſequence chuſes the Puniſhment due to it.

(5.) The eſtimation of an Offence is taken from the diſpoſition of him that does it. When 'tis done with pleaſure and obſtinacy, there is no place for Favour. Now final Impenitence alone makes Sin actually and eternally damning to the Sinner. Thoſe that, notwithſtanding all gracious Means, live continually in Rebellion againſt God; thoſe that impenitently die in their Sins; thoſe that deſire to live here for ever, that they might enjoy their ſweet Sins; thoſe that are ſo hardned and naturalized in their Vices, that if they were revived and brought again into this World of Temptations, would certainly return to the Pleaſures of Sin; is it

not

not righteous that their incorrigible Obſtinacy ſhould be puniſh'd for ever? Is it not juſt that thoſe who would continue under the *dominion of Sin*, ſhould forfeit all their claim to the Divine Mercy? For if we conſider them as unrepentant and irreclaimable from their Wickedneſs, there are in them the juſt provocations and true cauſes of God's final rejection and hatred: and if we conſider God as revealed in his Word and Works, his eſſential Properties, Wiſdom, Purity, Juſtice, neceſſarily work upon ſuch Objects in ſuch a manner. How zealous an Indignation did the Son of God expreſs againſt the obdurate Phariſees? *You Serpents, you Generation of Vipers, how ſhould you eſcape the Damnation of Hell?* They in deſpite of all his Miracles, the equal Expreſſions of his Goodneſs and Power, reſiſted his Authority, blaſphemed his Perſon, and ſlighted his Salvation. Now though other Sins are of an inferiour Nature, and weaker Evidence, yet Obſtinacy added to them, makes a Perſon unworthy and uncapable of Mercy. From hence the Miſery of the Damned is without Redemption, without Hope, without Allay for ever.

Pœnæ æqualitas non nude ſpectanda ut in ponderibus & menſuris, ſed expenſo propoſito, & voto ejus qui deliquit. *Grot.*

Mat. 23. 33.

II. I ſhall now proceed to conſider the Evidence of the Facts that is produc'd as the Reaſon of that Judgment.

The temper of Divine Juſtice is very obſervable in the particular Judgments recorded in Scripture. In the firſt proceſs of Juſtice on Earth, we read that God made the enquiry of *Adam*, *Haſt thou eaten of the Tree whereof I commanded thee that thou ſhouldſt not eat?* and by palpable Evidence convinc'd him before he condemn'd him. Thus before the fiery Vengeance upon the wicked Cities, the Memory of which will never be extinguiſh'd; The Lord ſaid to *Abraham*, *Becauſe the Cry of* Sodom *and* Gomorrah *is great, and becauſe their Sin is grievous, I will go down now, and ſee whether they have done according to the Cry of it that is come up unto me*; viz. whether they were ſo numerouſly and exceſſively wicked; *if not, I will know.* God is pleaſed to incarnate himſelf in Man's Expreſſion, to declare more ſenſibly to us, that he never puniſhes with precipitation, but after an equal trial of the Cauſe. Thus we read of that profane King of *Babylon*, *Belſhazzar*, *That he*

Gen. 3. 11.

Gen. 18. 20, 21

Dan. 5. 27.

was

was weighed in the Ballance, and found wanting, before he was ſentenc'd to be deprived of his Kingdom and Life. And the Deſtruction of the Antichriſtian State is attended with ſolemn Hallelujahs for the Righteouſneſs of that Judgment. And in the laſt Day the Righteouſneſs of God's Proceedings ſhall be univerſally manifeſt and magnified. 'Tis therefore called *the Day of the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.* Now in order to this, the Scripture informs us, that all the Works of Men ſhall be brought into Judgment, *even every ſecret thing, whether good or evil.* And the Apoſtle ſaith, *That we muſt all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

Rev. 19. 2, 3.

Rom. 2. 5.

Eccleſ. 12. ult.

2 Cor. 5. 10.

All Sins, whether ſecret or openly viſible, ſhall be accounted for. Thoſe Sins that have been acted in the moſt ſecret Retirement, ſo that no Eye of Man could take cognizance of them, Sins concealed from the Eye of the Day, the Light of the Sun, and from the Eye of the Night, the Light of a Candle, ſhall then be made manifeſt. Nay, the Sins of the Thoughts and

Affections, of which Satan could not accuſe Men, when the inward Fire of Luſt or Malice is not diſcovered by the leaſt ſmoak or ſparkles, by no expreſſions, all thoſe ſhall be brought to Judg-
Rom. 2. 16. ment: *God will judg the Secrets of Men by Jeſus Chriſt.*

The Sins of Omiſſion of our Duty that are ſo numerous, from careleſsneſs and diverſions, from ſlothfulneſs and delays, and that now ſo little affect us; for we are more ſenſible of what we do than of what we have not done; the guilt of all theſe ſhall then be heavily charged on the *Conſcience* of the Sinner. *I was an hungry, and you gave me no Meat; I was thirſty, and you gave me no Drink*, was the Accuſation of the Reprobates from the Judg himſelf. *To*
James 4. *him who knoweth to do Good, and doth it not, to him it is a Sin.* The neglect of improving all the Means, Advantages, and Opportunities of doing or receiving Good, will be a great part of that Judgment. The Lord called his Servants to an account for the Talents committed to their Truſt, and required Profit in proportion to their Number and Worth.

All Sins of Commiſſion in *Youth* and *Age*,

Age, whether *groſs Senſuality, as Laſciviouſneſs, Luſts, exceſs of Wine, Revellings, Banquetings, and abominable Idolatries, and all exceſs of Riot, ſhall be accounted for to him who is ready to judg the quick and the dead:* or Acts of Unrighteouſneſs to others. *He that doth wrong, ſhall receive according to the Wrong he has done.* And Sins of a leſſer guilt, for which the moſt are not touch'd with grief or ſhame, ſhall then be produc'd in Judgment. All the Sins of our Words, ſo eaſily committed, and not ſo eaſily obſerved, ſhall then be call'd to a heavy remembrance. The Judg himſelf tells us; *I ſay unto you, that every idle Word that Men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment.* And if vain Words, the Signs and immediate Effects of a vain Mind, ſhall ſadly encreaſe our Accounts, how much more all the contentious, fierce and revengeful Words, the detracting, falſe, contumelious and injurious Words, the impure, filthy and contagious Words, the prophane, blaſphemous and impious Words, that *flow from the evil Treaſure of the Heart?* O their dreadful Number, and oppreſſing Weight!

1 Pet. 4. 5.

Col. 3. 25.

Mat. 12.

And all the Aggravations and Circumſtances of Mens Sins, that raiſe their Guilt to ſuch fearful heights, ſhall be enumerated in order to Judgment. For thus 'twas foretold; *Behold, the*
Jude 14, 15. *Lord comes with ten thouſand of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly Deeds which they have ungodly committed; and all their hard Speeches which ungodly Sinners have ſpoken againſt him.* And all the good Works of the Saints ſhall then be remembred, even to the leaſt work of
Luke 21. 3, 4. Piety, the *giving of two Mites to the Treaſury of the Temple*; and the leaſt
Mat. 10. 42. work of Charity, the *giving a Cup of cold Water to a Diſciple,* upon the account of his relation unto Chriſt. All their ſecret Graces and Duties ſhall then be rewarded.

The manner of this Judicial Evidence is ſet forth to us in Scripture, by the *opening the Books*; congruouſly to proceedings in humane Judgement, wherein the Information and Charge is produc'd from Writings for the conviction of the Accuſed. Thus it was repreſented to St. *John* in a Viſion;
Rev. 20. 12. *I ſaw the Dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before*

fore God; and the Books were opened, and the Dead were judged out of the things that were written in the Books, according to their Works.

1. The Books of the Law and Goſpel ſhall then be open'd in all the Injunctions and Prohibitions, and our Lives compar'd with them. Our Saviour told the Jews, *Do not think that I will accuſe you to my Father; there is one that accuſeth you, even* Moſes, *in whom you truſt: not the Perſon, but the Law of* Moſes. And he denounced againſt thoſe that reject the Goſpel; the *Word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judg them in the laſt Day.* The Law is the exact Tranſcript of God's Sacred Will, the natural and immutable Rule of Righteouſneſs; 'tis *pure*, forbids all Sin, and enjoins univerſal Holineſs; 'tis *ſpiritual*, requires not only a conformity in Words and Actions, but inward Sanctity in Mind and Heart: for the Soul is the principal part of Man, entirely open to God's Eye, the Maker and Judg of it. And the moſt enlightned Saints have but an imperfect knowledg of it here. This made holy *David*, after his meditation upon its

John 5. 45.

John 12. 48.

Purity

Purity and Perfection, to cry out in an
Pſal. 19. Agony, *Who can underſtand his Errors! cleanſe thou me from ſecret Sins.* This, when opened in its ſpiritual and comprehenſive Nature, by a wiſe and zealous Preacher, darts a Light into the Conſcience, and diſcovers many ſecret Sins, that like ſo many Serpents were ſtill and quiet in the dark; but upon the ſudden breaking in of the Light, fly upon the Sinner, and torment him with their mortal Stings. But when the Law-giver himſelf ſhall expound the Law in its full extent and perfection, with reſpect to all the Duties it commands, and Sins it forbids, how guilty will Men appear? how unable to anſwer one Article of a thouſand charg'd upon them?

2. The Omniſcience of God will give moſt convincing Evidence of all
Heb. 4. 13. our Works: *All things are naked and open to his Eyes, with whom we have to do in Judgment.* The Pſalmiſt declares the infinite perſpicacity of his ſight: *The*
Pſal. 139. *Darkneſs hides not from thee, but the Night ſhines as the Day.* As his Light
1 Tim. 6. 16. and tranſcendent Brightneſs is inviſible to us, ſo our thickeſt Darkneſs is viſible

to

to him. We cannot ſee things in the Night, becauſe it hinders the reception of the Rays, that inſinuate into the Eye, and cauſes ſight: but the Eyes of our Judg are like a *flame of Fire*, diſ- Rev. 1. 14.
pelling all Darkneſs. From his Throne in Heaven, his piercing Eye ſees thro' all the concealments of Mens Sins. *Thou haſt ſet our Iniquities before thee,* Pſal. 90. 8.
and our ſecret Sins in the Light of thy Countenance. He diſcovered the Sacriledg of *Achan*, the Lie of *Gehazi*, the Deceit of *Ananias*. *Saul*'s Diſobedience in ſparing the *Amalekites* devoted 1 Sam. 15. 21.
to Deſtruction, had the colourable pretence of Piety, and, as a Sacrifice, was laid on the Altar. And *David*'s Murder of *Uriah* was imputed to the chance 2 Sam. 11. 25.
of War as a ſufficient excuſe. But though they might have deceiv'd others, they could not deceive God. He is intimately preſent with the Souls of Men, that are unſearchable to the moſt diſcerning Angels of Light, and knows all their moſt ſecret Deſigns and Deſires, the deepeſt Seeds of their Actions. He alone has exact Scales to *weigh the Spirits of Men*, all the Principles, Aims and Affections that are inſeparable from their Works. The Phariſees in whom

whom Pride was the firſt Property, and Hypocriſy a ſecond Nature, could not, with all their Saintly ſhews, impoſe on
Matth. 23. 14. our Saviour: *for he knew what was in Man.* He diſcovered their Alms to be not the
Matth. 6. 2. effect of Charity but Oſtentation, and their ſpecious Acts of Devotion to be a
Matth. 23. 14. train to ſurprize ſome rich Prey.

And this Divine knowledg of Men and their Actions is in order to Judgment. Thus the wiſe King declares,
Prov. 24. 12. *Doth not he that ponders the Heart conſider it? and he that keepeth thy Soul, doth not he know it? And ſhall not he render to every Man according to his Works?*
Jer. 17. 10. And God himſelf teſtifies, *I the Lord ſearch the Heart, even to give to every Man according to his Works.* For this reaſon he is ſaid to keep a Regiſter of Mens Sins. Thus he ſpeaks of the im-
Iſa. 65. 6. pure Idolatries of the Jews; *Behold, it is written before me,* to ſignify his exact and actual knowledg, *I will not keep ſilence, but will recompenſe, even recompenſe into their Boſoms.* And at the Day of Judgment he will declare his Knowledg of their Sins before all, and the moſt ſecret ſhall be made evident, as if written in their Foreheads in the moſt plain and legible Characters.

And

And all the Goodneſs of the Saints ſhall then be revealed by the Judg. Their greateſt Excellencies are inviſible to the Eyes of Men: the Sanctity of their Aims and Affections, which gives Life and Value to all the Acts of Obedience, their ſecret Duties, wherein the ſincerity and ardency of their Souls is moſt expreſs'd, are only known to God. And ſuch is the excellent humility of the Saints, that the more they are enrich'd, and abound with the gracious Influences of the Spirit, the leſs they diſcover to the World; as the Celeſtial Bodies, when in neareſt conjunction with the Sun, and moſt fill'd with his Light, are leaſt in appearance to the Inhabitants of the Earth. But there is a *Book of Remembrance before him, for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his Name. And they ſhall be mine, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, in the Day when I make up my Jewels: and I will ſpare them as a Man ſpares his Son that ſerves him.* Mal. 3. 16, 17.

* O ſi nobis animam boni viri liceret inſpicere, quam pulchram faciem, quam ſanctam, quam ex magnifico, placidoque fulgentem videremus! *Struc.*

3. The Conſcience of every Man ſhall then be open'd, and *give an accuſing or excuſing Teſtimony of all things:* for theſe Acts of Conſcience in the preſent Rom. 2. 15, 16.

ſent Life, have a final reſpect to God's Tribunal. And though the Accounts are ſo vaſt, there ſhall be an exact Agreement between the Books of God's Omniſcience, and of Conſcience in the *Day of Judgment*. Now indeed the Conſcience of Man, though never ſo inquiſitive and diligent in examining and reviſing his Ways, is unable to take a juſt account of his Sins. As one that would tell the firſt appearing Stars in the Evening, before he can reckon them, others appear and confound his Memory with their number: ſo when Conſcience is ſeriouſly intent in reflecting upon it ſelf, before it can reckon up the Sins committed againſt one Command, innumerable others appear. This made the Pſalmiſt, upon the ſurvey of his Actions, break forth in amazement and perplexity; *Mine Iniquities are more than the Hairs upon my Head, therefore my Heart fails me.* But it will be one of the Miracles of that Day, to enlarge the view of Conſcience to all their Sins. Now the Records of Conſcience are often obliterated, and the Sins written therein are forgotten; but then they ſhall appear in ſo clear an impreſſion, that the Wicked ſhall be inex-

Pſal. 40. 12.

inexcuſable to themſelves, and Conſcience ſubſcribes their Condemnation. And O the formidable Spectacle, when Conſcience enlightned by a Beam from Heaven, ſhall preſent to a Sinner in one view the Sins of his whole Life! Now Conſcience is a Notary in every Man's Boſom; and though 'tis not always vocal, yet writes down their Actions. *The Sin of* Judah *is written with a Pen of Iron, and with a point of a Diamond 'tis graven upon the Tables of the Heart.* Jer. 17. 1. But then it ſhall be compell'd to give a full Charge againſt the Guilty. Of this we have an infallible Preſage in this World, when Conſcience turns the Point againſt the Breaſt of a Sinner, and enforces the Tongue, by a ſecret inſtigation, to accuſe the Perſon. And this Information of Conſcience at the laſt will make the Sinner ſpeechleſs: for the Book of Accounts with Divine Juſtice, was always in his own keeping; and whatever is recorded there, was written with his own Hand. And how will thoſe hardned Sinners that now kick againſt the Pricks of Conſcience, be able to repel its ſtrong and quick Accuſations before that terrible Tribunal?

4. Other

4. Other numerous Witneſſes will appear to finiſh the proceſs of that Day. Not as if God, that knows all things, wants Information, but for the publick Conviction of the Wicked.

Satan will then bring in a bloody Charge againſt them. Such is his Malignity, that he is a Complainer of God to Man, and by calumniating the Bleſſed Creator, ſeduc'd our firſt Parents; and he is the Accuſer of Men to God. He is ſtiled the *Accuſer of the Brethren before God day and night.* Sometimes falſly, as when he taxed *Job*, that his Piety was mercenary; and often truly to provoke the Divine Diſpleaſure. But though his Charge be juſt againſt them as Sinners, yet as Penitent Sinners they are abſolved by the Judg upon the Throne of Grace. This we have repreſented to the Prophet *Zechary*, Joſhua *the High Prieſt*, a Type of the Church, *ſtanding before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan ſtanding at his right hand to accuſe him*; for that was the place of Accuſers. But Chriſt the Bleſſed Reconciler interpoſed: *And the Lord ſaid to Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath choſen*

Rev.

Zech. 3. 1, 2, 3.

choſen Jeruſalem, *rebuke thee.* But he will principally act the part of an Accuſer at the laſt Judgment. This is intimated in that fearful Imprecation, *Let Satan ſtand at his right hand: when he is judged, let him be condemned.* Pſal. 109. 6, 7. He is now an active watchful Spirit, whoſe Diligence is equal to his Malice, and by glittering Snares, or violent Temptations, draws Men to Sin. But then he will be their moſt bitter Accuſer, not from zeal of Juſtice, but pure Malignity. Then he will aggravate their Crimes by the moſt killing Circumſtances; though in accuſing them he endites himſelf, their Sins being uſually done by his ſollicitations.

And the Wicked themſelves will accuſe one another. In this World Fellow-ſinners uſually conceal one anothers Wickedneſs, reſtrain'd by their own obnoxiouſneſs. But then all that have been jointly engaged in the commiſſion of Sin, will impeach each other. The voluptuous Sinners that have excited one another to Luſt or Luxury; *Come, let us take our fill of Love till the Morning.* Prov. 7. 18. *Come, I will fetch Wine, and we will fill our ſelves with ſtrong Drink, for to morrow ſhall be as to day, and much* Iſa. 56. 12.

more abundant. All the charming Companions and Aſſociates will with fierceneſs charge one another. And the malicious cruel Sinners that ſay, *Come, let us lay wait for Blood, let us ſwallow them up quick as the Grave,* will then like enraged Furies fly upon one another. In all Sins of Combination, the inferiour Inſtruments will accuſe their Directors for their pernicious Counſel, and the Directors will accuſe the Inſtruments for their wicked Compliance.

Prov. 1.

And all the holy Servants of God, who by their Inſtructions, Counſels, Admonitions, Examples, have endeavoured to make the World better; eſpecially thoſe who by their Place and Relation were more concerned, and more zealouſly and compaſſionately urged and perſwaded thoſe under their Care to reform their Lives, and ſave their Souls, will give a heavy Teſtimony againſt them. Indeed the very Preſence of the Saints will upbraid the Wicked, for their reſiſting all the warming, melting Intreaties, all the grave and ſerious Reproofs, all the tender earneſt Expoſtulations, that were ineffectual by the hardneſs of their Hearts.

Briefly,

Briefly, the Scripture attributes to the Signs and Circumſtances of Mens Sins, a vocal Evidence againſt them. Thus the Prophet ſpeaking of the Houſe built by Rapine and Extortion, *The Stones of the Wall cry, and the Beams anſwer them*; and with concurrent Teſtimony accuſe the unrighteous Builder. And St. *James* declares, That *the Wages of the Hireling, kept back by Fraud, cry againſt the Oppreſſor. And the Ruſt of Gold and Silver treaſured up, is a Witneſs againſt the Covetous.* And this by the recognition of Conſcience will be a Memorial againſt them hereafter.

Hab. 2. 11.

James 5. 3, 4.

To what the Scripture ſpeaks of this kind of Evidence of Mens Sins, I ſhall add a uſeful Repreſentation fram'd by a Heathen, to ſignify that Wickedneſs, how ſecretly ſoever committed, ſhall be brought to light in Judgment. He tells us, "That the Soul of a very "guilty Wretch, was after Death ar- "raigned before one of the ſevere "Judges below. And at his Trial, "becauſe his atrocious Crimes were "done in ſecret, he ſtood upon his de- "fence, denying all. The Judg com- "manded his Lamp to be produc'd, "that was an Eye-witneſs of his Wick-

" edneſs. The Lamp appear'd, and " being demanded what it knew of " him? anſwered with a ſigh, Would " I had been conſcious of nothing, for " even now the remembrance of his " Villanies makes me to tremble: I " wiſh my Light had been extinguiſh- " ed, that the Oil that maintained had " quench'd it. But I burnt with diſ- " dain, and caſt about ſome Sparks to " fire his impure Bed, and was grieved " that my little Flame was ſo weak as " not to conſume it. I ſaid within my " ſelf, If the Sun ſaw theſe Villanies, " it would be eclips'd, and leave the " World in Darkneſs. But I now per- " ceive why I was conſtrain'd to give " Light to him, that being a ſecret Spy " of his Uncleanneſs, his Thefts and " Cruelties, I might reveal them. But we that are enlightned by Faith, and know that God is omnipreſent, and that what-ever Sin is done, though in the deepeſt and darkeſt receſs, is manifeſt to him, || have no need of *Lucian*'s Lamp to make our Judg to be feared by us.

|| Ipſe timendus eſt in publico, ipſe in ſecreto. Lucerna ardet? videt te. Lucerna extincta eſt? videt te. In cubile intras? videt te. In corde verſaris? videt te. Ipſum time.

3. The Impartiality of the Sentence will make the Juſtice of God conſpicuous before the whole World. This conſiſts in two things. 1. There

1. There will be no diſtinction of Perſons.

2. There will be a diſtinction of Cauſes in that Judgment; and according to their Nature, the Sentence will paſs upon all.

1. There will be no diſtinction of Perſons. In humane Courts the Judges ſometimes extend and amplify, ſometimes contract or ſmother the Evidence, and are more rigorous or favourable in their Sentence, as they are biaſs'd towards the Perſons before them. But the Righteous Judg of the World is uncapable of being inclin'd to Favour or Severity upon ſuch baſe Motives. This is frequently declared in Scripture, to poſſeſs us with his Fear. *If ye call upon the Father, who without reſpect of Perſons judges according to every Man's Work, paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear.* No ſpiritual Priviledges upon which Men are ſo apt to preſume, *viz.* that they are Members of the Reformed Church; that they are enrich'd with excellent Gifts; that they enjoy the Ordinances in their pureſt Adminiſtration, will avail them without real Holineſs in their Hearts and Lives. The being united to Societies

1 Pet. 1. 17.

of the moſt glorious Profeſſion, of ſtricteſt Purity, and ſublime Devotion, does no more prove one to be a real Saint, than the being of an eminent Company of Merchants proves one to be a rich Citizen. *Thoſe that bow the Knee and not the Heart in faithful Reverence, that give the empty Title of Lord to Chriſt, without the tribute of Obedience, will be rejected by him. Many ſhall*
Matth. 7. 22. *ſay at the Day of Judgment, Lord, Lord, we have propheſied in thy Name, and done many wondrous Works. Then will the Judg ſay, I know you not: Depart from me ye Workers of Iniquity.* No degrees of Civil Greatneſs will be of any moment and advantage in that day. Saint *John* teſtifies, *I ſaw the Dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God,* in an equal Line, to receive their Trial. Kings ſhall then be deveſted of their Imperial Titles, of their Crowns and Scepters, and their Robes of State, and only be accompanied with their Works. Of this we have an undoubted Proof, in that they are no more exempted from the common Law of dying than the meaneſt Slave. Death, that rugged Officer, arreſts them without Ceremony, and ſummons them to appear before

fore that Tribunal. The Royal Purple could not protect *Herod* from being devoured by Worms. The Apoſtle ſpeaks indefinitely in the fore-cited Place; *He that does wrong, ſhall receive for the wrong he has done; and there is no reſpect of Perſons.* Col. 3. ult. No circumſtantial Accidents can derive true worth, or truly debaſe Perſons, but inherent Qualities, and the Actions that flow from them: and accordingly, *the High and Holy God* will accept or diſapprove them. What St. *Paul* obſerves of the ſaving Grace of the Goſpel being indifferently offer'd to all, is applicable in this caſe. He tells us, *There is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian nor Scythian, Bond nor Free,* that are preferr'd or excluded upon a Carnal account, but that all may equally partake of ſpiritual Bleſſings. Thus the difference of Nations will be no Priviledg or Prejudice to any in the Day of Judgment. The moſt rude and contemptible ſhall have as fair and equal a Trial, as the moſt polite and civiliz'd. The ignorant *Barbarians* as the Learned *Grecians,* that ſo much boaſted of their vain Excellencies above them. The *Negroes* in *Africa* as the People of *Europe:* for Col. 3. 11.

they have the ſame Relation to God their Maker, and as truly bear the impreſſion of God ſtamped upon the Humane Nature in the Creation, and therefore common to the whole ſpecies of Mankind. An Image may be faſhion'd in Ebony as well as in Ivory. Briefly, all Men are equally ſubject to his Laws, and ſhall be equally accountable for their Actions. *The Rich and the Poor ſhall then meet together, without diſtinction, before God the Maker and Judg of them all.*

2. There ſhall be a diſtinction of Cauſes, and every Man be judged *according to his Works*, the tenour of good Works, and the deſert of bad. The
Gal. 6. 7, 8. Apoſtle aſſures us, *That whatſoever a Man ſows, that ſhall he reap: He that ſoweth to the Fleſh, ſhall of the Fleſh reap Corruption; but he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap Life everlaſting.* The Harveſt ſhall be according to the Seed, both in kind and meaſure.

Rom. 2. 7. (1.) *Thoſe who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality,* ſhall obtain *eter-*
Rom. 6. ult. *nal Life.* Indeed, *eternal Life* is *the Gift of infinite Bounty*, nay of *pure Mercy*,

Mercy, and Mercy excludes Merit. Jude 21.
'Tis ſaid of the bleſſed Martyrs, who contended for the Truth and Purity of the Goſpel to the Death, that *their Robes were waſh'd white in the Blood of* Rev. 7. 14. *the Lamb*, not in their own Blood. Their Right to Heaven was from the application of his Merits to them. But the Reward is diſpens'd from God according to the Evangelical Law; not only as a magnificent Prince, but as *a Righteous Judg*. All thoſe to whom the Goſpel promiſes eternal Life, ſhall infallibly obtain it, and none that the Goſpel excludes. Thoſe who were ſenſible of their Sins, and cordially forſaking them, did humbly and entirely depend upon the Grace of God, through the bleſſed Reconciler and Saviour, ſhall be juſtified and glorified. Then the Judg will diſcern between unfeigned Faith and vain Preſumption, and will juſtify the Faith of the Saints by the genuine Fruits of it, *the Godlineſs, Righteouſneſs, and Sobriety of their Lives*, and a victorious perſeverance in their Duty, notwithſtanding all the pleaſing Temptations or Tortures to withdraw them from it. Thus the Apoſtle expreſſes his humble Confidence;

2 Tim. 4. 7,8. *I have fought the good Fight, I have finiſh'd my Courſe; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which God the Righteous Judg will give me at that day: and not only to me, but to all that love his Appearance.* We read in the Deſcription of the Laſt Judg-
Rev. 20. 12. ment, That *the Book of Life was opened: the Names of all that were written in Heaven,* ſhall then be declared, that it may appear they are *ſaved by Grace.* For it was his moſt free pleaſure to ſelect ſome from the common Maſs of Perdition, who were naturally as guilty and corrupted as others, and to predeſtinate them to Eternal Glory, and effectual perſevering Grace to prepare them for it. *The Saints are created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good Works, which God hath before ordained,* that *they ſhould walk in them.* And the New Creation is as undeſerved and entire an Effect of God's Love as the firſt was. But 'tis ſaid, *That every Man was judged according to his Works.* For Eternal Election does not entitle a Perſon immediately to Heaven, but according to the Order eſtabliſh'd in the Goſpel. Thus the King at the laſt Day ſpeaks to the Elect;
Mat. 25. 34. 35. *Come, ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the*

the Kingdom, prepared for you before the Foundation of the World: for I was hungry, and ye fed me; naked, and ye clothed me.

And according as the Saints have excel'd in Fidelity & Zeal in God's Service, they ſhall be rewarded with a more excellent Glory. The Stars of the ſupreme Heaven are of a different brightneſs and greatneſs, as the Stars of the viſible Firmament. Indeed all are perfectly happy, without * jealouſy, that any is equal or ſuperior to them in that Kingdom. But God will crown his own Graces as the Saints have improved them. Our Saviour valued the Widow's two Mites, as tranſcending all the magnificent Gifts of others, becauſe of the degrees of Love in the Giver. There was a richer Mine of Affection in her Heart, Gold of a more noble Vein, more pure and precious than all their Riches. This was of greater price in God's Account, who weighs the Spirits in his Ballance. God *will accept and reward according to what a Man has, and not according to what he has not.* He that improves but two Talents with his beſt skill and diligence, ſhall have a greater Reward than another that had ten

* Plus amant illud Regnum in quo non timent habere conſortes. *Aug.* de Civit. Dei.

2 Cor. 8. 12.

ten Talents, and was remiſs and leſs careful to employ them for his Maſter's Profit. The Rule will be exactly obſerved, *He that ſows bountifully, ſhall reap bountifully; and he that ſows ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly.*

And if God will be thus impartial in rewarding the Saints, much more in puniſhing the Wicked. For the remuneration of our Duty is the effect of his moſt free Favour; but the recompences of Sin are due, and decreed by Juſtice, in Number, Weight, and Meaſure. The ſeverity of the Sentence will be in proportion, as Mens Sins have been more numerous and heinous. Although all the Damned ſhall be equally miſerable in Deſpair, all broken on an endleſs Wheel, yet the degrees of their Torment are different. Sins of Ignorance are extenuated in compariſon of rebellious Sins againſt Knowledg. The firſt are like a Servant's daſhing againſt his Maſter in the dark; the other like the inſolent ſtriking of him in the light: And as they incur greater Guilt, will expoſe to greater Puniſhment. Accordingly our Saviour predicts, *That the Servant which knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not himſelf, neither*

Luk. 12. 47, 48.

neither did according to his Will, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of Stripes, ſhall be beaten with few Stripes. Unactive Knowledg is worſe than Ignorance. For this reaſon the Caſe of Heathens will be more tolerable than of the Jews: for though ſome natural Principles were ſtrong and quick in their Minds, that made them ſenſible of their Duty and Danger, yet they were not ſo clear and perfect as the Law delivered by *Moſes*. Thoſe Sins that were Infirmities in a Pagan, were preſumptuous in a Jew. And the Caſe of the Jews will be more tolerable than of diſobedient Chriſtians, who enjoy the Goſpel leſs charged with Ceremonies, and more abundant in Grace than the Moſaical Diſpenſation. Thoſe that have ſet before them the Life of Chriſt, the Model of all Perfection, that are excited by ſuch loud Calls *to flee from the Wrath to come*, and yet are deaf and regardleſs to the Commands, nay to the melting Invitations and precious Promiſes of the Goſpel, ſhall have a more intolerable Judgment than the moſt guilty Sinners, even the Sodomites and Sidonians that were Strangers to it.

The

The precious Blood of the Son of God deſpiſed, induces a Crimſon Guilt. And as Sins are committed with Pride and Pleaſure, with eager Appetite and Obſtinacy, the revenge of Juſtice will be more heavy upon Perſons.

More particularly, Sins of Conſequence, whereby others are drawn to Sin, will heighten the Guilt, and the retribution of Juſtice will be to every Man *according to his Ways, and according to the fruit of his Doings.*

Jer. 17. 10.

This will principally concern Superiours in eminency of Place, whoſe Dignity has always a concomitant proportion of Duty. Their vicious Actions are Examples, and their Examples more powerful Rules than their Laws, and give countenance to others to ſin licentiouſly. They *ſin with an high Hand*, and involve the Ruin of innumerable Perſons that depend upon them. As the *Dragon* in the *Revelation*, whoſe Fall from Heaven drew a Train of leſſer Stars with him. And all inferiour Magiſtrates, who by perſonal commiſſion, or partial connivance, encourage and harden others in Sin, and by their Power diſcountenance ſerious Religion, and obſtruct the Progreſs of it,

it, heap up Damnation to themſelves.

And the Miniſters of the Word, who are obliged to *watch for the Souls of Men*; and ſhould, like the Heavens, by their Light, Influence, and Motion, their Doctrine and Lives, guide and quicken others in the Ways of Holineſs; if by their Neglect and Wickedneſs others are loſt for ever, their Account will be moſt heavy and undoing.

Of this Number are thoſe, who by their unholy Converſation weaken the Authority and Efficacy of the Word, and more ſucceſsfully perſwade Men to do Evil, than by their Preaching to do well: for we are apt to take deeper impreſſion through the Eye than thro' the Ear, and to follow the Phyſician's Practice rather than his Counſel. Theſe *periſh not alone in their Iniquity*. And ſuch who are unfaithful Diſpenſers of the Treaſures of their Lord, and by looſe Doctrines corrupt the Minds of Men, to fancy a Mercy in God derogatory to his Holineſs, that although they live indulgently in Sin, they may obtain an eaſy Pardon and Happineſs at laſt. And ſuch who employ their high Commiſſion for low and baſe Ends: Thoſe

Thoſe who inſtead of *preaching Jeſus Chriſt, and him Crucified*, the pure and ſaving Truths derived from the Fountain of the Goſpel, entertain their Hearers with flaſhy Conceits, and ſtudied Vanities, to give a reliſh to Curioſity, and to have the applauſe of Fools, and obſcure the native Majeſty of the Word, enervate its Force, and render it powerleſs to Conſcience.

And thoſe who ſpend their Zeal in things of no moment to Salvation, and let fly bitter Invectives againſt thoſe that diſſent from them in unconcerning Matters, by which they harden Atheiſtical Scorners in vilifying the Office of the Miniſtry as a *Carnal Invention*, ſet up and uſed for Secular Ends; and induce others to place Religion in Formalities and ſlight colours of it, as if Conformity to needleſs Rites would exclude the Defects of ſubſtantial Holineſs.

'Tis obſerv'd in the Chaldee Paraphraſe, when God was inquiring of *Cain* concerning *Abel*, that he charges him, *The Voice of thy Brother's Blood cries unto me:* As if *Cain* were a Murderer not of a ſingle Man only, but of a numerous Race that might have deſcended

ſcended from his Brother. Thus a wicked Miniſter will be charg'd not only for murdering himſelf, but as many precious Souls as might have been converted and ſaved, if he had faithfully performed his Duty.

And Parents that ſhould inſtil the Principles of Godlineſs into their Children in their early Age, and ſeaſon their Minds with the knowledg of the Divine Laws, to regulate their Lives, and make them ſenſible of their Obligations to obey them, that ſhould recommend Religion to their Affections by an holy and heavenly Converſation, if by the neglect of their Duty their Children are expoſed as a Prey to the Tempter, and ruin'd for ever, it will enhance their laſt Reckoning, and encreaſe the Score of their Guilts beyond expreſſion.

And Maſters of Families, and all others that have Authority and Advantage to preſerve or reform from evil thoſe that are committed to their Care, and to inſtruct and command them to do what is pleaſing to God, and profitable to their Souls, will be ſadly accountable for thoſe that periſh by their neglect.

In ſhort, we ſee by common Experience, that Company and mutual Conſent is a uſual Motive to Sin; and many Perſons that alone would with abhorrence reject ſome Temptations, yet are ſociably ſinful. Now all thoſe who by excitation or example, lead others to Deſtruction, as they are firſt in Sin, will be chief in Puniſhment. We read Luke 16. 28. in the Parable of the rich Voluptuary, that being in Hell, he deſired a Meſſenger might be diſpatch'd from the Dead to warn his Brethren, leſt they ſhould come to that place of Torment. Is there ſuch Charity in Hell to the Souls of others? || No, that Furnace always burns with its proper Flames, there is not a ſpark of that Divine Fire there: But remembring how guilty he had been of their Sins, feared that his Torments would be encreaſed by their coming thither. Society in endleſs Sorrows does not divide, but reflect them.

|| Non orat pro fratrum ſalute quâ non tangitur reprobus, ſed pro ſe ne ipſius tormenta ex conſortio fratrum augeautur. *Brugen.*

Now if Damnation for Sin be ſuch a Miſery as is expreſs'd in the Scripture by the moſt violent Figures and Words of the heavieſt ſignification; if all the poſſible Tortures ſuffered here are but a Lenitive to the preparations of Wrath in Hell, how miſerable ſhall thoſe be, who,

who, as if a ſingle Damnation were a light matter, do not only commit Sin in their own Perſons, but are in combination with Satan to corrupt and deſtroy others, and multiply Damnation againſt themſelves? Theſe *treaſure up Wrath againſt the day of Wrath.*

Briefly; The whole Proceſs of that Day, the Arraignment and Sentence will be ſo ordered, the Righteouſneſs and Reaſonableneſs of the Proceedings will be ſo manifeſt, as to clear the Judg, and confound the Guilty. *God will be juſtified in his Sentence, and overcome when he judgeth.*

I ſhall now come to apply this great Doctrine.

1. Let us from what has been diſcours'd of Judgment to come, be excited to confirm our Faith in this great and uſeful Doctrine; and by ſerious and frequent thoughts to apply it to our ſelves. Some within the Church have only a ſuperficial belief of this, as a point of the Religion wherein they were educated; but carnal Affections, Fear, Hope, Love, and Deſire, controul their Aſſent, as to its operation upon them. They believe in the ge-

neral that God is the Judg and Rewarder of our Actions, and in the abſence of Temptation reſolve to obey him: but when a ſtrong Tryal comes from ſome temporal Good or Evil that is preſent, their Faith is negligent, and unactive to keep them from Sin. Now to make our Faith powerful, we muſt,

Firſt, confirm it by convincing Arguments, that it may be an undoubted Aſſurance, a certain Light, directive and perſwaſive in the courſe of our Lives. Some Doctrines of Religion, that are of an incomprehenſible nature, and ſhould be received with ſilent adoration for the Authority of the Revealer, are obſtinately contradicted by ſome, upon a vain pretence that nothing is to be believed that will not endure the rigorous inquiſition of Reaſon, and be comprehended by our narrow Minds: but Reaſon, though darkned, ſees the neceſſity of a future Judgment. Nature and Scripture teſtify there is a God, and that he has a Right, and Power, and Will to diſtribute the rewards of Vertue, and the penalties of Vice to his Subjects. To deny this, is directly againſt the implanted

implanted Notion of the Deity in the Heart of Man. There is a real difference between Moral Good and Evil, not depending upon Opinion, but ariſing from the immutable Nature of things, and the eternal Law of God. Otherwiſe, conſidered in it ſelf, it were no more faulty to murder a Parent, than to kill a Fly; nor to rob a Travellor, than to chaſe a Deer. But the Conſcience of the moſt profligate Wretch would ſtartle at ſuch an Aſſertion. The diſpoſition and admirable order of the World in its various parts, and the viciſſitude of Seaſons, declare to the obſerving Mind, that a moſt wiſe, good, and powerful God governs and preſerves all things by his vigorus Influence. And can it be that the Divine Providence, ſo viſibly wiſe and good in regulating the courſe of Nature, ſhould be defective towards Man, the moſt noble part of the World? And can it be extended to humane Affairs, if there be no other than the preſent ſtate, wherein the Righteous are afflicted, and the Wicked proſper? where Sins of the deepeſt ſtain and the lowdeſt cry are unpuniſh'd; and the ſublime and truly heroick Ver-

tues are unrewarded? nay, where Vice receives the natural reward of Vertue, Honour and Felicity, and Vertue the juſt wages of Vice, Diſgrace and Sufferings? 'Tis neceſſary therefore that there be a future State, and a righteous diſtribution of Rewards, according to the good and evil of Mens Actions here.

The Heathens diſguiſed this terrible Truth under the Fictions of the Infernal Judges, *Minos*, and *Rhadamanthus*, and *Eacus*. And the Furies and Vultures, and fiery Lake, which they thought tormented the Wicked in the next World, diſcover what apprehenſions they had of the deſert of Sin, and the puniſhment that certainly attended it. The Guilty would fain be freed from the terrours of it, and ſtrangle Conſcience, that is bound over to give Teſtimony in the Day of Judgment, that they may ſin without ſcruples. But though Fear be a troubleſom and involuntary Paſſion, they cannot totally extinguiſh the internal ſenſe and preſages of future Judgment; but as the motions of Courage came upon *Sampſon* at times; ſo Conſcience awakened by ſharp Afflictions, by ſudden Dangers,

Teſtimonium animæ naturaliter Chriſtiana. *Tert.*

Dangers, and the approaches of Death, makes a ſad deduction of paſt Sins, and forecaſts cruel things. It cites the Offender before the enlightened Tribunal of Heaven, ſcourges with remorſe, and makes him feel even here the ſtrokes of Hell. Tho' the Sin be ſecret, and the guilty Perſon powerful, not within the cognizance or reach of humane Juſtice, yet Conſcience has a Rack within, and cauſes pain and anxiety, by fearful expectations of Judgment to come.

And Divine Revelation is moſt expreſs in declaring this great Truth. The Light of Faith is more clear and certain from the infallible Word of God, than the Light of Reaſon. Before the Flood, *Enoch* in the early Age of the World foretold it; *Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all.* Jude 14, 15.

Solomon under the Law repeats this Doctrine, that *every ſecret thing ſhall be brought into Judgment, whether good or evil.* Eccleſ. 12.

And God himſelf ſpeaks in the ſublimeſt ſtile of Majeſty, and ſwears by himſelf, for our firmer belief, *As I live, ſaith the Lord, every Knee ſhall bow to me, and every Tongue confeſs to God,* the glory of his Eſa. 45. 23.

Juſtice. From whence the Apoſtle infers, *So then every one of us ſhall give an account to God for himſelf.* In the Goſpel we have diſtinctly deſcribed the Perſon of the Judg, the glorious Attendants of his Coming, and the manner of his proceedings in that Day. Now the many Predictions in Scripture ſo viſibly accompliſh'd in the Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, and by him, give infallible aſſurance, that all his Promiſes and Threatnings are equally certain, and ſhall be fulfilled. As ſure as our Saviour is come in his humble ſtate, and has accompliſh'd the Prophecies of his Sufferings, he will come in his Glory to judg the World.

Rom. 14. 10, 11.

Mat. 13. 42, 43. & 23. 30, 31.

An verè extribuit nobis omnia quæ promiſit, & de ſolo die judicii nos ſefellit? *Aug.*

Secondly. That the belief of eternal Judgment may be powerful in our hearts and lives, it muſt be actuated by frequent and ſerious thoughts. Faith gives life and efficacy to our notions of eternal things, and Conſideration makes our Faith effectual. As the natural Life is preſerved by the activity of the vital Principles, the Circulation of the Blood, the drawing of the Breath, the motion of the Pulſe; ſo the ſpiritual Life is maintained by the exerciſe of Grace. The carnal Affecti-

ons

ons dare not appear before Reaſon and Conſcience, when awakened by the ſerious believing Conſideration of eternal Judgment. The Evangeliſts relate, that when our Saviour was aſleep in the Ship, a ſudden Tempeſt aroſe that was likely to over-ſet it in the Sea: but awakened by the cry of his Diſciples, *Lord, ſave us, we periſh*; *he preſently rebuked the Wind, and a Calm enſued.* Thus whilſt the habit of Faith is aſleep in the Soul, there will be great danger from the concurrent violence of Temptations and Corruptions; but when 'tis awakened by lively and powerful thoughts, it does Miracles in ſubduing the ſtrongeſt Luſts. 'Tis monſtrous and beyond all belief, did not ſenſible Experience make it evident, that notwithſtanding the minds of Men are convinc'd of the certainty of the Divine Judgment, and the Recompences that immediatly follow, yet their Wills remain unconverted, and their Affections cold and unactive in their preparations for it: That ſuch numbers who have ſo much Chriſtianity as to believe that an irrevocable Doom will paſs upon the Wicked, and ſo little Chriſtianity, that they cannot

not juſtly hope to eſcape from it, yet are ſo careleſs of their Duty, nay joyful in their ſinful courſes, as if Judgment were a dreadleſs thing. What is the cauſe of this prodigious ſecurity? 'Tis the neglect of conſidering, that *we muſt all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt, to receive according to the things done in the body, whether good or evil.*

The next Cauſe of this ſtupidity is, that they put *the Evil Day* at a remote diſtance: as the Scorners ſaid, *the Viſion is for many Days:* They ſtudy to be ſecure, and delay their preparations, preſuming to have time enough before them. Their Senſes and Faculties are ſo imployed abroad in the World, they have neither leiſure nor deſire to think ſeriouſly of it. Their Hearts are ſo raviſh'd with Dreams of Senſuality, and engaged in terrene Affairs, that they are very averſe from exerciſing their minds upon ſuch diſpleaſing Objects.

Vain Men! how willingly do they deceive themſelves? The Judg himſelf declares, *Behold, I come quickly: His Throne is like a fiery Flame, and his Wheels as burning Fire*; an Emblem of

of his ſwift coming to judgment. Can they be aſſur'd of Life one Hour? The Day of Death is equivalent to the Day of Judgment: for immediately after there is a final deciſion of Mens ſtates for ever.

I have read of an excellent Preacher, that in a Sermon deſcribed the laſt Judgment in all its Terrors, with ſuch ardent Expreſſions, and thoſe animated with ſuch an affecting Voice, ſuch an inflamed Countenance and Action, that his Hearers broke forth into paſſionate Cries, as if the Judg himſelf had been preſent to paſs the final Sentence upon them. In the heighth of their Commotion, the Preacher bid them ſtop their Tears and Paſſions, for he had one thing more to add, the moſt afflicting and aſtoniſhing Conſideration of all the reſt, That within leſs than a quarter of an hour, the Memory and regard of that which ſo tranſported them would vaniſh, and their Affections return to carnal Objects in their uſual manner.

The neglect of Conſideration makes even the Doctrine of Judgment to come to be without efficacy. 'Tis neceſſary therefore that the belief of this

this be ſo firmly ſeated in the Heart as its Throne, that it may command the thoughts to be very attentive to it, and may have Regal Power over our Wills and Affections, that our Lives may be ordered according to its Rules.

2. The Conſideration of Eternal Judgment will vindicate the Proceedings of Divine Providence, and the honour of God's governing this World, from the imputations of Unrighteouſneſs. God is provoked every day, yet ſpares the Wicked, and heaps an abundance of Favours on them. His Patience and Goodneſs they prophanely abuſe, and become more obdurate and inflexible. They are apt to blaſpheme the Excellency of his Nature in their Hearts, thinking that he is ignorant or careleſs, impotent or unjuſt. They implicitly deny his Providence and Judgment, that he does not obſerve their Sins, and will not require an account for them: Or elſe they interpret his Permiſſion to be an Approbation of their Sins. *Theſe things haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence; thou thoughteſt I was ſuch an one as thy ſelf.* Thus the Heathens tranſplanted the Vices of Earth to Heaven, and repreſented their Gods

Pſal. 14. 1.

Pſal. 50.

to

to be ſenſual, jealous, furious as Men, and accordingly expected an eaſy Abſolution for their Sins. Or elſe the diſtance of Judgment to come ſo hardens them, that they hear God's Thunder with leſs fear, than Boys do their Squibs and Crackers. *Becauſe Sentence againſt an evil Work is not ſpeedily executed, therefore the hearts of the Sons of Men are fully ſet in them to do evil.* Eccleſ. 8. 2. But how deſperate is the madneſs of Sinners? God now *ſeems to wink at their Sins*, Acts 17. 130. but hath appointed a day of Accounts. He ſuffers them to live in proſperity, *but they are reſerved to the day of Judgment to be puniſh'd*, 2 Pet. 2. 4. and poſſibly ſooner: for ſometimes they are cut off by viſible Vengeance, to convince the World that the ſupream Judg does not *bear the Sword in vain.* But though 'tis delayed for a time, yet he declares, that *their Sins are laid up in ſtore with him, and ſealed up among his Treaſures. To him belongs Vengeance and Recompence.* Deut. 32. 34. He is a mild Judge now, and his Clemency ſuſpends their Puniſhment; but ‖ Juſtice will not forget it. He threatens the ſecure Sinner, *I will reprove thee, and ſet thy Sins in order before thine eyes.* ‖ Amos 8. 7. Pſal. 50. 21.

How

How will the ſcornful obſtinate Sinner change complexion and tremble, when an Army of Sins more terrible than ſo many Furies ſhall be ranged in Battel, and with fiery Darts wound his naked Soul? How will the ſtubborn Atheiſt, that pleaſes himſelf with vain imaginations of the Eternity of the World, and the Mortality of the Soul, be confounded when he feels the truth of Scripture-threatnings, to his eternal Sorrow? then all their Raileries will be turn'd into Lamentations. 'Tis not for * want of Power that God ſpares the Wicked, but becauſe they are always in his Hands, and he can make them as miſerable as they are ſinful when he pleaſes. 'Tis not through the neglect of Juſtice, but for moſt wiſe and holy Reaſons, as ſhall appear in the laſt day, when a deciſive irreverſible Judgment ſhall be pronounc'd, and immediately inflicted upon them before the World. When an † Actor at *Athens* ſpoke with admiration of Riches, as the moſt valuable Acquiſition, and of the Felicity of Rich Men: the People were in an Uproar at the immorality of the Speech, and were ready to chaſe him from the Stage.

* Cum habeat in poteſtate vindictam mavult diu tenere patientiam. *Cyprian.* de bon. Patient.

† Ὦ χρύσε λιξίωμα καλλιστον βροτοις, &c. Cum hi noviſſimi verſus in Tragœdia *Euripidis* pronuntiati eſſent, totus populus ad ejiciendum & Actorum & Carmen conſurrexit uno impetu: donec *Euripides* in medium proſiluit petens ut expectarent, viderentque quem admirator auri exitum faceret *Senec.* Epiſt. 115.

Stage. But the Poet himſelf appeared, and deſired them to ſtop their Fury till they ſaw the *Cataſtrophe*, the wretched end of that ſordid Miſer. Thus we are apt to accuſe the ways of God when the Wicked flouriſh; but we ſhould ſtop our tumultuous thoughts, for their end will abſolve Divine Providence from all undue reflections upon the account of their temporal happineſs.

And the ſound belief of this will rectify all miſtaking apprehenſions, and clear all perplexing appearances about the Sufferings of the Righteous here.

Indeed if we conſider the holieſt Men as they are Sinners, their Afflictions are ſo far from blemiſhing the Juſtice of God, that they are the ſigns of his Mercy: for all is a Favour on this ſide Hell to thoſe that deſerve it. *David*, an excellent Saint, acknowledgeth the righteouſneſs of God's Judgments with reſpect to himſelf. But when the Saints ſuffer for a righteous Cauſe; and, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it, *for thy ſake are we killed all the day long, and are counted as Sheep for the ſlaughter*; there is not a viſible correſpondency between the Providence of God

Pſal. 4.

God in his governing the World, and the unchangeable Rules of Juſtice, that thoſe who do evil ſhould ſuffer evil, and thoſe who do well ſhould be happy. As the Apoſtle ſpeaks to the perſecuted Chriſtians, *It is a righteous thing with God to recompence Tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled reſt with us.* Now there is a day coming, when the Perſecutors ſhall be puniſh'd, and the Saints be rewarded for all their Sufferings, and the diſtribution of Recompences ſhall be in the preſence of the World, for the glory of Divine Juſtice. For the diſtinction that is made between Men at Death is private and particular, and not ſufficient for the honour of God's Government. But at the laſt Day all Men that have lived in ſeveral ſucceſſions of Ages ſhall appear, and Juſtice have a ſolemn Proceſs and Triumph before Angels and Men. As ſome excellent Piece that is to be expos'd to publick view, is covered with a Traverſe, to prevent the diſturbance in the Working, and the diſcovery of the Work till brought to ſuch perfection as will ſurpriſe with wonder thoſe that ſee it: So God is

2 Theſſ. 6. 7.

pleaſed

pleaſed to cover his Proceedings for a time, but in the laſt Day there will be *ſuch a Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God*, that thoſe who now doubt, or complain of his Juſtice, ſhall admire and adore it. Rom. 2. 5.

3. The belief of this Doctrine as it vindicates Divine Providence, ſo 'tis powerful to comfort the Saints under Perſecutions for Righteouſneſs ſake; eſpecially when Innocence is wounded with ſlanderous Darts, and Calumnies are joyned with Cruelties, repreſenting them as worthy of publick Hatred. It was one of the Subtile Artifices of *Julian* the Apoſtate, to mingle the Images of the Heathen Gods with thoſe of the Emperours, that the doing reverence (as the Chriſtians were commanded) to all together, might imply a dereliction and renouncing of their Religion, and their Simplicity ſeem Impiety: or if, jealous of ſlipping from their Profeſſion, they refuſed to do it, they might ſeem to deny the Expreſſions of honour due to their Emperours, and be reputed to ſuffer not as Chriſtian Martyrs, but as Rebels. But the believing Conſideration of God's righteous Judg-

ment will make them deſpiſe the Cenſures and Reproaches of malicious Adverſaries. *With me*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *it is a very ſmall thing that I ſhould be judged by Man's Judgment; he that judgeth me is the Lord.* The ſevereſt Cenſure was of no more weight compar'd with the approbation of God, than the lighteſt Feather that flies in the Air, put in the Scales againſt the Globe of the Earth. The aſſurance of a righteous Cauſe, and a righteous Judg, will preſerve an inward and joyful tranquillity of Soul in the midſt of all the Storms of Reproach and Scandalous Imputations; like the calmneſs of a Haven when the Sea is tempeſtuous without. And this will fortify Believers to bear with an invincible Courage all the Violence that is offered to them for their fidelity to God. All the wrongs and injuries they endure, ſhall be redreſt with infinite advantage. The extreameſt Evils to which they are expoſed for Chriſt, are like the Chariots of Fire ſent from God, not to conſume but conduct *Elias* in triumph into the higheſt Heaven. God will give them preſent Support, inward

1 Cor. 4. 3.

Inter Judicem juſtum, & conſcientiam tuam, noli timere niſi cauſam tuam. *Aug.*

ward Conſolations, and a future Crown. There is an appointed day when oppreſſed Innocence ſhall obtain the nobleſt Victory, and diſgraced Godlineſs the moſt publick and higheſt Honour. *The Faith of ſincere Chriſtians ſhall be found to Praiſe and Glory.* They may ſuffer under the tyranny of Time, but ſhall Reign in the Kingdom of Eternity. The belief of this, when firmly radicated in the heart, is ſo powerful as to make them *glory in the ſharpeſt Tribulations*, and joyfully triumph over Satan, with his perverted malignant World. *Cantando rumpitur Anguis.* But alas, the Sin, and a great part of the trouble of the Saints, ariſes from their weakneſs of Faith, and not patient waiting for the Day of the Lord. When heavy Perſecutions and great Diſtreſſes are continued by the reſtleſs Adverſaries, they are apt through impatience and inſtability of mind, to be full of ſorrowful Complaints that God delays their particular Deliverance. And as ſometimes the Clock out-runs the motion of the Sun, that is the true meaſure of Time; ſo their haſty deſires prevent the *eternal Counſel of his Will*, that has determined the 1 Pet. 1. 7.

period of the Miſeries of his People, and of the Proſperity of the Wicked in the fitteſt time. And that he ſuſpends his glorious Coming to judg the World in Righteouſneſs, diſcourageth weaker Chriſtians, and makes them ready to faint *in the day of Adverſity.* 2 Pet. 3. 9. *But the Lord is not ſlack in performing his Promiſe, as Men count ſlackneſs.* There is not the leaſt reaſon to queſtion his Fidelity and Power, or to ſuſpect his Love and Remembrance of his People. And as the Stars of Heaven enlighten the Earth, but the Candles on Earth cannot enlighten the Heavens: ſo the Wiſdom of God's Counſel and Providence ſhould direct us patiently to expect his appointed time, but our glimmering Reaſon cannot direct him.

4. The ſerious belief of future Judgment is the moſt effectual reſtraint from ſecret Sins. Men are apt to encourage themſelves in evil upon the account of ſecrecy: 'tis the uſual tinder of Temptations. If ſolitude and ſilence, if the darkneſs of the night, or any diſguiſes may conceal their Wickedneſs from humane Eyes, they are bold and ſecure as to God. The Pſalmiſt declares

clares what is the inward principle that acts them, what is the language of their hearts: *All the workers of Iniquity boaſt themſelves, they ſay, The Lord ſhall not ſee, neither ſhall the God of* Jacob *regard it.* Pſal. 94. 5, 6. But O the brutiſh folly of Men, to think, that becauſe they do not ſee God, that he does not ſee them. As if one ſhould ſhut his Eyes in the face of the Sun, and do ſome foul abominable thing, thinking himſelf to be unſeen, becauſe he ſees no perſon. How vain is the impure diligence of the Adulterer, the crafty diligence of the Deceiver, the ſollicitous diligence of other Sinners to hide things from the Judge of all? *Shall not God ſearch it out, for he knows the very ſecrets of the heart?* What a confounding diſcovery will be made of ſecret Wickedneſs at the laſt day? Here obſcurity is the maſk of Shame that conceals it from the World. Or if only Children and Fools that are not capible to judg of the indecency and turpitude of Actions, be Spectators, Men are not touch'd with ſhame for foul things. But then their Wickedneſs ſhall be diſplayed before God, the holy Angels and Saints. The actual belief of this would

deprive Satan of one of his greateſt Advantages, and be a bleſſed Preſervative from many Sins that allure the conſent by the temptation of ſecrecy. A conſidering Chriſtian will reject them with indignation, ſaying with *Joſeph*, *How can I do this great Wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* The Sins undiſcovered and upuniſh'd by temporal Tribunals, ſhall then receive a juſt recompence.

5. The remembrance of that ſtrict Judgment, is the moſt natural and powerful remedy againſt ſenſual Temptations that ſo eaſily inſinuate and engage the Hearts of Men. *S. Peter* reckoning up the Heathens Sins, *Laſciviouſneſs, Luſts, exceſs of Wine, Revellings*, and *abominable Idolatries*, tells the Chriſtians, *that the Gentiles thought it ſtrange that they did not run with them to the ſame exceſs of riot.* As the Diſciples when our Saviour walk'd upon the Waters, thought he had been a Spirit, judging that no real Body could tread on them without ſinking: thus Men are apt to think it impoſſible to reſtrain their carnal appetites when allured by pleaſing Objects. But the belief of the Terrors of the Lord, will

1 Pet. 4. 3, 4.

damp

damp the ſenſual Affections when moſt ſtrongly enclin'd to forbidden things, and extinguiſh delight in Sin: for Delight and Fear are inconſiſtent. Therefore the wiſe Preacher gives this Counſel, *Rejoice, O young Man in thy youth, and let thy Heart chear thee in the Days of thy Youth, and walk in the ways of thy Heart, and ſight of thine Eyes: but know thou for all theſe things God will bring thee to Judgment.* This will change the apprehenſions of the mind, and alter the taſte of the appetite, and make the moſt enticing and irreſiſtible Luſts, the objects of our greateſt deteſtation. Eccleſ. 11.

6. The conſideration that the Son of God, clothed with our Nature, ſhall judg the World, *affords ſtrong Conſolation* to his People, and is a motive of great terror to the Wicked. How comfortable is it to his People that he who loved them above his Life, and was their Redeemer on the Croſs, ſhall be their Judg on the Throne? *He is the ſame Jeſus Chriſt, yeſterday, to day, and for ever*; the ſame indulgent Saviour, in the exaltation of his Glory, as when under Sufferings, Reproach and Shame. He is deſcribed in that

glorious Appearance, by the conjunct Titles of his Majeſty and Power, *The Great God*; and of his Compaſſion and Mercy, *Our Saviour*, to ſignify his Ability and Affection to make them happy. When he comes with a heavenly Train of Angels to Judgment, he will be as tender of his Servants, as when he ſuffered for them in his humble ſtate. He that paid their Debt, and ſeal'd their Pardon with his own Blood, will certainly publiſh the Acquittance. How is it poſſible he ſhould condemn thoſe for whom he died, and who appear with the impreſſions of his reconciling Blood upon them? How reviving is it that Chriſt, whoſe Glory was the end and perfection of their Lives, ſhall diſpoſe their ſtates for ever? that he, who eſteems every act of their Charity and Kindneſs done to his Servants as done to himſelf, ſhall diſpenſe the bleſſed Reward? *Then the King will ſay to them plac'd on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World.* O the tranſports of Joy to hear thoſe words from his Life-breathing Lips! The Prophet breaks forth in an Extaſy,

Tit. 12. 13.

Phil. 1.

Mat. 25.

How

How beautiful are the feet of the Meſſengers of Peace, thoſe that bring gladtidings of Salvation? but how much more beautiful is the face of the Author of our Peace and Salvation? O how full of Serenity, and Clemency, and Glory! The expectation of this makes them languiſh with impatience for his Coming. Though the Preparations of that Day are ſo dreadful, when *the Sun ſhall be darkned, and the Moon turned into Blood,* and the Stars fall like leaves in Autumn, yet 'tis ſtiled a *Day of Refreſhment* to the Saints. Acts. 2.

But how dreadful will his Coming in Majeſty to Judgment be to the Wicked! *They ſhall ſee him whom they have pierced,* and with bitter lamentation remember the Indignities offered to him. What Excuſes can they alledg, why they did not believe and obey the Goſpel? Our Saviour revealed high Myſteries, but confirm'd them with great Miracles. He requir'd ſtrict Holineſs, but offer'd Divine Grace to enable Men to do his Will. *He poured forth his Spirit upon them,* but their Hearts were as hard as the Rocks, and as barren as the Sands. Then he will reproach them for their inſolent Contempt

Videris vulnera quæ inflixiſtis, agnoſcitis latus quod pupugiſtis, quoniam & per vos, & propter vos apertum eſt, nec intrare voluiſtis. *Aug.*

tempt of all the Perfections of his Divine Nature, and the bleeding Sufferings of his Humane Nature to reconcile them to God: for their undervaluing *neglect of the great Salvation*, ſo dearly purchaſed, and ſo freely and earneſtly offered to them: for their Obſtinacy, that the purple Streams that flow'd from his Crucified Body, that all the Sorrows and Agonies of his Soul were not effectual Perſwaſives to make them forſake their Sins: for their *preferring the Bramble to reign over them*, Satan the Deſtroyer of Souls, and ungrateful *rejecting the true Vine*, the bleſſed Saviour, who by ſo many miraculous Mercies, ſollicited their Love, and deſerved their Service; this will make the Sentence as juſt as terrible, and the more terrible becauſe juſt. This will exaſperate the Anguiſh, that the Goſpel ſhall be a *ſavour of Death to them*; and the bleſſed Redeemer pronounce them *curſed*, and diſpatch them *to everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels for ever*. The Judgment of the Redeemer will be more heavy than that of the Creator. For all the Riches of his Goodneſs which they deſpiſed, ſhall be the Meaſure of their

their Guilt and Woes. All the Means of Grace uſed for their Converſion, but fruſtrated by their Perverſneſs, ſhall be charged upon their Score. What Conſternation will ſeize the Wicked, when ten thouſand Accuſers ſhall riſe up in Judgment againſt them, and not one Advocate appear for their defence? Satan will be ready to aggravate their Sins above his own: For altho the ſuperior Excellence of his Nature and State, did heighten his Obligation, and conſequently his diſobedience to his Creator; and that he ſinn'd of himſelf, derived a Guilt upon him exceeding that of Man's original Sin, who was ſeduced to his Ruin: yet in that Juſtice was ſo quick and ſevere, that the Angels, after their Sin, were immediately expell'd from their bleſſed Habitation, no ſpace of Repentance was allowed; and no Mediator interpos'd to obtain Terms of Reconciliation with the incenſed Deity, their Doom was final and irrevocable: but after our rebellious Sin, the Son of God, ſuch was his immortal Love, was willing to be mortal to redeem ſinful Men, and freely offer'd himſelf a Sacrifice to atone the divine Diſpleaſure: and a Day of Grace and

and Long-ſufferance was granted, and many compaſſionate Invitations were ſent from Heaven to ſoften their ſtony Hearts: But they neglected and deſpis'd the Grace of the Goſpel, and wilfully excluded themſelves from Mercy. In this reſpect they are more guilty than the fallen Angels; and Juſtice will revenge the Abuſe of Mercy. Do they hope to ſoften the Judg by Submiſſions and Deprecations? Alas, he will be inflexible to all their Prayers and Tears. The Lamb will be then a Lion arm'd with Terrors for their Deſtruction. Or can they appeal to an higher Court to mitigate or reverſe the Sentence? No, his Authority is ſupream, and confirm'd by the immutable Oath of God. Or, do they think to reſiſt the execution of the Sentence? Deſperate Folly! The Angels, notwithſtanding their numbers and ſtrength, could not for a moment eſcape his revenging Hand. The whole World of Sinners is of no more Force againſt his Wrath, than the light Duſt againſt a Whirlwind, or dry Stubble againſt devouring Fire. Or do they think, by a ſtubborn Spirit, to endure it? Self-deceiving Wretches! If the correction of

of his Children here, tho allayed, and for their amendment, make *their Beauty and Strength conſume away as a Moth*, how inſupportable will the Vengeance be on his obſtinate Enemies? *Who knows the Power of his Anger?* Who can ſound the Depths of his Diſpleaſure?

7. The Conſideration of Eternal Judgment ſhould be a powerful Incentive to prepare our ſelves for it. The Affair is infinitely ſerious, for it concerns our Salvation or Damnation for ever. Yet the Pleaſures and Buſineſs of the World faſten Men in Security, and hinder the intire application of their Minds to prepare for their laſt Account. 'Tis an awful Caution of our Saviour to his Diſciples, *Take heed leſt at any time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs, and Cares of this Life, and ſo that Day come upon you unawares: For as a Snare ſhall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the Earth.* A diſſolute voluptuous courſe of Life, is join'd with a brutiſh neglect of God and the Soul: and the indulging the carnal Appetite, though not in ſuch enormous Exceſſes as the Prophane are guilty of, alienates the

the Minds of Men from due conſidering their Spiritual State, and leſſens the preventive Fear that makes us ſerious and diligent *to be found of God in Peace.* And others are ſo involved in ſecular Buſineſs, that they are not at leiſure, to regard the *one Thing neceſſary:* their Minds are ſo overſhaded with the Cares of the preſent World, they cannot take a right Aſpect of the World to come. The Flood *broke* in upon the old World, whilſt they *were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, buying and ſelling,* and deſtroyed them all: The laſt Fire will devour this World in the ſame wretched incogitancy, and ſtupid neglect to prepare themſelves for Judgment. *As it was in the Days of* Noah, *ſo ſhall it be in the Days of the Son of Man.* 'Tis a divine and ſolemn Warning, *Behold, I come as a Thief in the Night, bleſſed is he that watcheth and keepeth his Garments, leſt he be found naked,* without the Robe of Holineſs, and be expos'd to confounding ſhame in that Day. When ſecure and careleſs Sinners ſhall ſay, *Peace and Safety, ſudden deſtruction will come upon them, as Travel upon a Woman with Child;* as ſurpriſingly, as irreſiſtibly,

ſtibly, *and they ſhall not eſcape.*

But *the Wiſe foreſee the Evil*, and eſteem it their incomparable Intereſt to ſecure the Favour of the Supream Judg. 'Tis the Inference the Apoſtle makes from the Certainty of our appearing before the Righteous Judg, *Wherefore we labour, that whether preſent, or abſent*, in this or the next Life, *we may be accepted of him.* This was his great Deſign, his chief Care, his Duty and his Glory: Never did any perſon more ardently aſpire, and ambitiouſly endeavour for the obtaining a Kingdom, than he did to ſecure his own Acceptance with the Lord. In order to this, I will lay down the Rules of our Acceptance in that Day, and conclude the Argument. 2 Cor. 5. 9.

Firſt, Unfained Faith in the Lord Jeſus is abſolutely neceſſary, that we may be accepted. This is ſuch a belief of his all-ſufficient Merits, and his merciful inclination to ſave us, that the guilty and ſelf-condemned Sinner entirely conſents to the Terms of the Goſpel, as well as to the Priviledges of it, with a reliance upon his Merits, and a reſolution to obey his Precepts. He is a *Prieſt on a Throne, a Prince, and*

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a Saviour, and ſo muſt be acknowledged and received. Upon this condition his Righteouſneſs is freely imputed to us for our Juſtification unto Life, without which we muſt periſh in our Sins. For,

1. The beſt Saints are guilty and deeply obnoxious to the *Law*, and the Judgment of God is invariably according to Truth; ſo that appearing in their Sins, they will be caſt for ever. God's Tribunal, like that of the ſevere Roman Judg, is *Reorum Scopulus*, a Rock that daſhes in pieces all the Guilty that come to it. Therefore the Pſalmiſt ſo earneſtly deprecates, *Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, O Lord; for in thy ſight ſhall no Man living be juſtified.* And the Apoſtle, tho' a tranſcendent Saint, deveſts himſelf of his own Righteouſneſs, that he may be entirely covered with the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and renounces all things, that *he may be found in him as his Surety* in that Day of Accounts, and obtain Pardon by vertue of his Satisfaction for Sin. We cannot perfectly obey the Commands, nor appeaſe the Diſpleaſure of God: but the expiatory Sacrifice of Chriſt propitiats the

the Divine Juſtice. This alone can make us ſtand in Judgment before the *fiery Law*, and *the fiery Tribunal*, and the *Judg who is a conſuming Fire*, to all the Guilty that appear in their Sins before him. The Blood of the Mediator has ſprinkled the Throne of God in Heaven; and our Conſciences being ſprinkl'd with it by an unfeigned Faith, we may appear before God the Judg of all with an humble confidence, and enter into the Holy of Holies, the Celeſtial Sanctuary with joy.

2. Not only the pardon of our Sins, but the acceptance and rewarding of our Services with eternal Glory is upon the account of our Saviour's compleat Righteouſneſs. There are defilements in the Perſons, and defects in the works of the Saints. Their moſt holy and fervent Prayers are perfum'd by the Incenſe of his Interceſſion, and ſo become grateful to God. Our beſt Vertues are mix'd and ſhadowed with Imperfections; but in him all Graces were conſpicuous in their conſummate degrees. Our Obedience, ſuppoſing it perfect, is of no deſert: *When we have done all, we are unprofitable Servants*: but his Obedience was infinitely meri- Rev. 8. 3.

torious by the union of the Deity with his humane Nature, and is the foundation of the excellent Reward. Not that his Merits derive a value to our Works to make them worthy of eternal Glory: as ſome noble Mineral infuſed into Water, that is in it ſelf without taſte or efficacy, gives it a medicinal tincture and Virtue; for this is impoſſible, ſince the infinite Dignity of his Perſon, and his moſt perfect habitual & actual Holineſs, that are the fountains and reaſons of his Merits, are incommunicable to our Perſons and Works. But the active and paſſive Obedience of Chriſt is ſo ſatisfactory and meritorious, that God is pleaſed graciouſly to reward with the Crown of Life the mean Services of thoſe who are by a lively and purifying Faith united to him.

Secondly, Sincere Obedience, that is an uniform and entire reſpect to all the Commands of God, will alone be accepted in that day: for his Authority runs through all, and binds them on the Conſcience. *David* had this Teſtimony from God himſelf, that he *was a Man after his own Heart, that fulfilled all his Will.* And St. *John* refers the deciſion of our ſtate to this, *If our Hearts*

Hearts condemn us of any allowed Sin of omiſſion or commiſſion, much more *God will, who is greater than our Hearts, and knows all things.* But if the illuminated tender Conſcience doth not condemn us of inſincerity, *we have confidence towards God*, that he will ſpare and accept us notwithſtanding our Frailties, and give free and ſafe acceſs into his Preſence. The lives of many are chequer'd with a ſtrange diſparity, they are reſtrain'd from ſome Sins of apparent odiouſneſs, but indulgent to others; they are ſtrict in ſome Duties, but looſe and ſlack in others, as if they hoped by way of commutation to be accepted of God; to expiate their Delinquencies in one kind by ſupererrogating in another. Some are painted Phariſees in the duties of the firſt Table, very exact in the formalities of outward Devotions, but groſs Publicans in the duties of the ſecond; careleſs of Juſtice and Equity, and Charity to Men: Others are in appearance ſtrictly moral in the diſcharge of their duties to Men, and negligent of their Obligations to God. But partial Obedience can never endure the trial of Conſcience, much leſs of God. For what is the weak

1 John 3. 20, 21.

light of our Minds, to the pure Eyes of his Glory? It will make us liable to inward rebuke now, and to open confusion at the last. St. *Paul's rejoycing was from the Testimony of his Conscience, that in simplicity and godly Sincerity he had his Conversation in the World:* and, as he expresses it in another place, it was his *daily Exercise to have a Conscience void of Offence towards God, and towards Men.* Tho our conquest of Sin be not compleat, yet our resolution and endeavours must be to mortify it in every kind. Tho our Obedience has not the perfection of Degrees, we must be equally regarding the Divine Law. If there be any secret-favour'd Sin, either of Omission or Commission, it will render our Petitions unacceptable at the Throne of Grace, and our Persons at the Throne of Judgment; *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, the Lord will not hear my Prayer.* The Law requires the performance of our Duty without abatement, or denounceth the Penalty without allay or mitigation: The Gospel has not relax'd the strictness of the Law, as 'tis the Rule of Life, but as it was the condition of obtaining Life. Sincere Obedience is accepted by that gracious

2 Cor. 1. 12.

Cove-

Covenant, where the *Legal Perfection* is wanting; but that is indiſpenſably required of all. I may illuſtrate this by a Paſſage of *Alexander the Great*, who being deſirous to learn Geometry, applied himſelf to a skilful Inſtructer in it. But his warlike Diſpoſition made him more capable to conquer, than to meaſure the Earth; ſo that tired with the firſt Propoſitions, he deſir'd his Maſter to make the Scheme more clear and plain, and eaſy to him: * To whom the Maſter replied, that the *Theorems* of that Science were equally difficult to all, and requir'd the ſame attention of Mind to underſtand them. Thus the Goſpel of Mercy requires of all ſincere Sanctification, and ſerious endeavours to perfect Holineſs in the Fear of God, and without this none ſhall be exempted from Condemnation.

* Cui præceptor: iſta inquit omnibus eadem ſunt, æque difficilia. *Senec.* Ep. 91.

To the ſincerity of Obedience, I ſhall add a more reſtrained Notion of it as reſpecting Religion. The Duties of Piety conſiſt of an outward and inward part; and the one without the other, is but as a Carcaſs without a quickning Soul. Now there will be an exquiſite Anatomy of the Heart in that Judgment, a diſcovery of all the Principles

and Motives by which Men were acted; and then he that is a Saint inwardly, *in the Spirit*, who with pure Aims and holy Affections hath ſerved God, ſhall have *praiſe of him.* And thoſe who have us'd God to injoy the World, that have aſſumed pretences of Piety for ſecular Ends, ſhall be reproved. This will be a cauſe of wonder in that day, that many *who are highly eſteemed by Men* as excellent Saints, *ſhall be an abomination to God.* That in the broad way to Hell thouſands go thither is ſad beyond expreſſion, but not ſtrange at all: but that in the Path of Heaven any ſhould deſcend to Hell, is aſtoniſhing. That thoſe who live without God in the World, in the prophane neglect of his Worſhip, in a diſſolute diſorderly courſe, ſhould fall under Condemnation, is believed of all: but that thoſe who have appeared zealous in Religion, ſhall be at laſt rejected, is contrary to univerſal expectation. And not only the groſs Hypocrite that deceives others, but he that deceives himſelf by the external practice of holy Duties, without correſpondent lively Affections; that prays with that coldneſs as if he had no deſire to be heard,

and

and hears with that careleſneſs as if he had no deſire to be ſanctified by the Word, and is converſant in other parts of divine Service in that ſlight manner, as if he had no deſign to be ſaved, ſhall by a convincing upbraiding Light ſee his Wickedneſs in diſhonouring that God whom he pretended to worſhip, and neglecting his Soul. When the Upright as pure Gold ſhall be more radiant by the Fire, the Inſincere like reprobate Silver ſhall not endure that ſevere trial.

Thirdly, The frequent diſcuſſion of Conſcience, and reviewing our Ways, is neceſſary in order to our comfortable appearing before our Judg. This is a Duty of conſtant Revolution: for while we are in Fleſh, the beſt Saints, notwithſtanding all their vigilance and diligence, are overtaken by ſurprizal, and ſometimes overborn by ſtrong temptations; and 'tis more neceſſary to beg for daily Pardon, than for our daily Bread. Under the Law, if any one had by touching a dead Body contracted Uncleanneſs, he was to waſh his Clothes in the Evening, and not to lie down in his Uncleanneſs. This was typical of our Duty, that we ſhould

waſh away our ſinful Defilements every day in the purifying Fountain of Chriſt's Blood, *that is ſet open for Sin and for Uncleanneſs.* And the Method of the Goſpel to obtain the grant of Pardon, and our comfortable Senſe, and the bleſſed Effects of it is this, there muſt be a mournful Sight, and ſerious Acknowledgment of our daily Sins, and a judging our ſelves by the domeſtical Tribunal in our Breaſts as worthy of Condemnation: for though we cannot ſatisfy Divine Juſtice for the leaſt Sin, we muſt glorify it; and with humility and fervency deſire that God would graciouſly forgive our renewed Sins, with unfeigned Reſolutions and Care againſt them for the future. Thus we are to ſue out our Pardon for Sins committed every day. And whereas many *Errors* in regard of our frailty, and their fineneſs, do ſlip from us, we ſhould with contrite Spirits implore the divine Majeſty *to cleanſe us from our ſecret Sins*, ſuch as through ignorance or inadvertency eſcape from our obſervation. If we are obliged to be reconciled to an offended or offending Brother before the night, and *the Sun muſt not go down upon our Wrath*, much more

Pſal. 19. 12.

more to be reconciled to an offended God, that his Diſpleaſure may be atoned. The Morning and Evening-Sacrifice was a Figure of the conſtant uſe of Chriſt's Merits and Mediation for us. The ſecure neglect of renewing our Repentance for our renewed Sins, deprives us of the Comforts of the Covenant, and will make the thoughts of Judgment as heavy as Mountains upon the Conſcience, when 'tis awakened out of its ſlumber. But when the Soul's Accounts are kept clear with Heaven every day, O what a bleſſed Reſt does the penitent Believer enjoy in the Favour of God! O the divine Calm of Conſcience, when our Debts are cancell'd in the Book of God's Remembrance! If we ſhould be unexpectedly ſummoned to appear *before the Judg of all*, the ſight of our Sins will rather excite thankful Affections, and joyful Praiſes of God for his Mercy, that he hath pardoned them; than fearful deſpairing thoughts of his Mercy, that he will not pardon them.

And as this conſidering our ways leads to Repentance, and is a Remedy for paſt Sins, ſo 'tis a powerful Preſervative from Sins afterwards. For as in

in War the greateſt care is to fortify the weakeſt Part of a beſieged Town, and make it impregnable; ſo a Chriſtian, by the experience of his infirmity and danger, will be more wiſe and wary, more circumſpect and reſolved againſt thoſe Sins whereby he has often been foil'd, to prevent the daily incurſion, and ſudden ſurreption by them. And according to the degrees of our Innocence, we have confidence of Acceptance with God in Judgment.

Fourthly, Let us improve with a wiſe and ſingular diligence the Talents committed to our Truſt: for in that day we ſhall be reſponſible for all that we have received. All the Bleſſings we poſſeſs, whether natural, our Life, our Faculties, our Endowments, our Health and Strength; or Civil, Honour and Dignity, Riches and Reputation; or Spiritual, the Goſpel in its Light and Power, the Graces and Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, as they are Gifts from God's Love, ſo they are Talents to be imployed for his Glory. We are Stewards, not Proprietaries: for the Supream Lord does not relinquiſh his Right in our Bleſſings, that we may diſpoſe of them at our own pleaſure, but

but hath preſcribed Rules for our uſing them in order to his Glory, our own Good, and the Benefit of others. And 'tis ſad to conſider that uſually thoſe who enjoy the greateſt Gifts, render the leaſt Acknowledgments, and the moſt abundant in Favours are moſt barren in Thankfulneſs. Time, that unvaluable Treaſure, that is due to God and the Soul, the Price of which ariſes from the Work of Salvation to be done in it, how is it ſquander'd away? Conſcience would bluſh at the ſerious reflection that every day ſo much is ſpent in the Buſineſs of the World, or Pleaſures, and ſo little redeemed for Communion with the Holy God: that as in the Prophetick Dream the lean Kine devoured the Fat, ſo unconcerning Vanities take up that time that ſhould be employed for our laſt and bleſſed End. While Time is miſerably waſted, the Soul lies a bleeding to everlaſting Death. More particularly, we ſhall be accountable for all the days of *the Son of Man* that we have ſeen, all the ſpecial Seaſons of Grace: theſe we ſhould improve for our Eternal Advantage, to prepare us for the Divine Preſence above. But alas, the Lord's Day that

that is consecrated for the immediate Service of God, and should be entirely spent in it, and in things that have a necessary subordination to it, yet neither the enforcement of Duty, nor incitations of Love prevail upon the most, conscienciously to imploy it in spiritual Affairs. If they afford their presence at the Publick Worship, 'tis thought enough; and, as if the rest of the Day was unsanctified Time, they waste it either in Complemental Visits, or Secular Business, in Recreations, or things impertinent to their Salvation.

Riches are an excellent Instrument of doing good: Gold is the most precious and extensive Metal, and by a marvellous Art an Ounce may be beaten out into some hundred Leaves: but 'tis a more happy Art by giving it, to enrich our own Souls, and supply the Necessities of many others. But great Estates are often used to foment Mens vicious guilty Affections, Pride, and Sensuality; and 'tis called * Greatness and Magnificence to waste them in sumptuous Vanities. I instance in these Talents, because they are usually abused to the dishonour of the Donor.

* Nullis vitiis desunt pretiosa nomina. *Plin.* lib. 73.

If

If the ſlothful Servant that hid his ſingle Talent in a Napkin, and returned it without advantage to his Lord, was *caſt into outer darkneſs, where there is weeping and gnaſhing of teeth*; a fearful Image of what will befal all unprofitable Perſons, how ſevere will their Accounts be who laviſh out their numerous Talents to gratify their carnal Appetites, and betray the Bleſſings of God to his Enemy the Devil? Only the wiſe and good Servant, that with prudent Contrivance, and zealous Endeavours, improves his Talents, ſhall from the gracious Lord, in whom are all Attractives and Remuneratives of our Service, receive an excellent Reward.

Fifthly, Another Rule of our Acceptance at the laſt Day is, That we muſt with Courage and Zeal maintain in our rank and places the Cauſe of Chriſt. For thus he declares expreſly, *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before Men, him alſo will I confeſs before my Father which is in Heaven. But whoſoever ſhall deny me before Men, him alſo will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven.* When the Truth, Purity, and Power of Religion, in Doctrine, Worſhip, and Practice, is diſcountenanc'd and overborn,

Mat. 10. 33, 34.

born, our Saviour commands, and will reward our undiſcouraged viſible Conſtancy in it. He will not only reign in our Hearts, but be honoured with our Lips, and in our Converſations. We uſurp the Title of Chriſtians, unleſs we adhere to our Duty in deſpite of all oppoſition. The Temptations that uſually withdraw Men from confeſſing and glorifying Chriſt, are ſuch as work upon the Paſſions of Fear and Shame. And the conſideration of the laſt Judgment will fortify us againſt both.

Rom. 10.

1. Sometimes Religion expoſes the Profeſſors of it to the loſs of all temporal Enjoyments, and of Life it ſelf. And when the Honour of our Saviour requires ſuch a Service of us, when that Confirmation is neceſſary to recommend Divine Truth to the Belief and Affections of others, when our chearful and couragious Example in ſuffering would animate thoſe that are fearful to Conſtancy and Confeſſion, then from Cowardiſe to withdraw our Teſtimony, is to betray him again. When our Duty is attended with extream Dangers, then the ſincerity and perfection of our Love to Chriſt is brought to the ſtricteſt trial. As true Carbuncles

cles are diſcovered in the Night, for the Darkneſs redoubles their Splendor; ſo the fidelity of Chriſtians is evident in Perſecutions that enflame and excite their Zeal to magnify the Name of Chriſt in the ſight of the World. *There is no Fear in Love, but perfect Love caſts out Fear.* 1 Joh. 4. 18. But Fearfulneſs hinders the expreſſing acts of Love to Chriſt, and betrays to Apoſtacy. For as every Paſſion is a Perturbation, ſo eſpecially Carnal Fear that blinds and diſturbs the Mind, and hinders the ſerious conſideration of the Reaſons of our Duty, and thoſe Motives to perſevere in it, that are the Fountains of our Strength. From hence the timerous are often treacherous, and Faith lies buried under the cold pale Aſhes of Fear. Now the irregularity of this Paſſion is beſt cured by directing it to the moſt powerful Object. As the Rod of *Moſes* ſwallowed up the Rods of the Magicians, ſo a ſtronger Fear will ſubdue that which is in a weaker degree. Our Saviour therefore threatens thoſe that for the fear of Men *(who can but kill the Body)* dare not own and defend his Truth and Cauſe, that he will renounce them before his Father in the great Day,

Day, the immediate conſequence of which will be the *deſtruction of Body and Soul in Hell.* If Earthly Potentates had a Juriſdiction over Heaven, if Men were to be tried by their Laws at the laſt Day, if their Power extended to Eternity, they might exact unlimited Obedience to their Wills; but Conſcience is a more deſirable Friend and terrible Enemy than *Cæſar*; and all temporal Tribunals are ſubordinate and accountable to the Supream and Eternal: there is *one Lawgiver and Judg, who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy for ever.* It is the worſt Perdition to ſecure our ſelves by the neglect of our Duty, when we ought to periſh for the Glory of our Saviour. *He that ſaves his Life ſhall loſe it.*

Matth. 10. 31, 32, 33.

2. Shame wounds deeper the Breaſts of ſome than Violence. *Zedekiah* would rather expoſe his Kingdom and Life to the Fury of the Chaldean Armies, than be himſelf expoſed as an Object of Deriſion by ſurrendring it. And Satan who underſtands the temper of Mens Spirits, ſuits his Temptations accordingly. The Purity and Holineſs of Religion, expreſt in the Actions of the Saints, is by the ſcurrilous

Reflections

Reflections and bitter *Sarcaſms* of prophane Perſons made *contemptible*. This is as fooliſh and malicious, as if a Slave ſhould reproach the Son of a King, that he was like his Father in his Countenance and Actions; for by how much the reſemblance of God's Holineſs appears with more evidence and eminence in their Lives, their Divine Relation is more certainly and juſtly to be acknowledged. Yet how many are aſhamed of this Glory? And Zeal to vindicate the Honour of Religion is traduc'd and vilified, either as the Effect of deſigning Faction, or of the Indiſcretion and Raſhneſs of a weak Judgment and ſtrong Paſſions. In every Age the faithful Servants of God are by ſcornful Titles deſpiſed: *We are accounted*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *the Off-ſcouring of the World.* But a generous Chriſtian looks upon diſgrace for the ſake of Chriſt as his Honour. The Apoſtles *rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his Name.* 'Tis ſaid of the Baptiſt, *He was not that Light, but came to bear Witneſs to that Light*: intimating as if that were the next degree of Dignity to it. And our Saviour, ſpeaking of the Proofs of

1 Cor. 4. 17.

Acts 5. 41.

his Divine Miſſion, reckons up the Witneſſes of ſuch Dignity, that 'tis not poſſible for Sacred Ambition to aſpire to higher Honour, than to be in Conjunction with them: *they are John the Baptiſt, his Miracles, his Father, and the Scriptures.*

John 5. 33, 36, 37, 39.

Let us appeal then from the light depraved Fancies of carnal Men, to the wiſe and faithful Judgment and Authority of the Son of God. He will at the laſt Day, in the preſence of his Father and all the Court of Heaven, give an incomparable Crown to all that have *deſpiſed Shame* for his ſake. But thoſe vile Spirits, whoſe Courage of Straw is quell'd by vain Opinion, and the Reproaches of Fools, and have deſerted the Cauſe of Chriſt, ſhall then be clothed with Confuſion; for this we are aſſured by our Judg, That *whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and my words, in this adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the Holy Angels.* If the unnatural Brothers were aſtoniſh'd when the Governor of *Egypt* told them, *I am* Joſeph *whom ye ſold*; how much more will falſe Chriſtians, when

Mark 8. 38.

when the Lord of Glory ſhall tell them, I am Jeſus whom for baſe ſhame ye denied? How will it confound thoſe abject Wretches to be a ſpectacle of Abhorrence and Scorn before that Univerſal Glorious Confluence? They would chuſe rather to be covered under the Ruins of the World. If we value and deſire the Approbation of the King of Angels, if we fear a final rejection from him, to obtain the one and avoid the other, we muſt entirely adhere to his Intereſt, without any reſpect to the eyes and eſteem of the perverſe deceived World.

Sixthly, A cordial beneficent Love to the Saints, is a requiſite Qualification of our Acceptance in the Day of Judgment. *Then ſhall the King ſay to them on his right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World. For I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in Priſon, and ye came unto me.* The Union and Endearments betwixt Chriſt and his People, are mutual and Matth. 25. 34, 35. 36.

reflexive; as they are extreamly tender of his Glory, ſo he is concern'd in all that is done to them. And though the Perfection of Love conſiſts more in the Affection of the Heart than in outward Offices, yet our Saviour moſt congruouſly produces in Judgment the conſpicuous Effects of Love to them, the ſupplying their Wants, allaying their Sorrows, owning them when obſcured and depreſt by Afflictions, and injuriouſly treated by others. This love of Service that is directed and exerciſed towards the Saints, for the Image of God ſhining in them, becauſe they are the Children of God, and Members of Chriſt, and therefore extended to all in whom the reaſon of that Love appears, ſhall be glorioufly rewarded: for he interprets what is done upon his Account to thoſe who are his own by ſo many dear Titles, as done to himſelf. And what is more becoming his excellent Goodneſs, than to reward the Works of Mercy with ſaving Mercy? But thoſe who when Chriſt preſents himſelf to them in his poor diſtreſſed Members, and ſollicits their aſſiſtance, to protect them from Injuries, to refreſh their Sorrows, to ſupport

ſupport them in their Exigencies, thoſe that have Ability, but want Affection to do them good, and incompaſſionately neglect the ſuffering Saints, ſhall be ſentenc'd to be tormented with the Apoſtate Angels for ever. What Indignity is it to the Son of God, that thoſe for whom he ſhed his moſt precious Blood, ſhould be in leſs value and regard with many, than the Dogs and Horſes maintained for their pleaſure? And if thoſe *on the left hand* ſhall be condemned to eternal Fire, for the coldneſs of their Love, how terrible will the Judgment be of thoſe that from the heat of their Enmity outragiouſly perſecute the Servants of Chriſt for his ſake, in their Perſons, Eſtates, Reputations, that with a worſe than barbarous inhumanity ſeek their ruin? Is there any Sin of a more mortal Guilt? The infernal Furnace is ſeven-fold heated for the puniſhing ſuch Wickedneſs.

To conclude this Argument, let us obſerve the Command of our Saviour, *To watch and pray always, that we may be counted worthy to ſtand before the Son of Man.* Theſe are Duties of univerſal Influence into our Lives, the one pre-

vents Careleſneſs, the other vain Confidence in our ſelves; and the conſideration of Judgment to come, is the greateſt Motive to them, and the firſt Principle of Holineſs. This ſhould work more powerful in us, conſidering the Day of Death is equivalent to the Day of Judgment to every Perſon; for then a particular Sentence deciſive and irrevocable paſſes, that ſhall be publiſh'd at the laſt Day. Methinks the Terrors of the Lord ſhould engage our Souls and Senſes to a continual preparation for his Coming. 'Tis repreſented ſo as to affect the Eye, and keep it vigilant: *Behold, the Lord comes with ten thouſand of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all.* Jude 15. Rev. 1. 9. *Behold, he comes in the Clouds, and every Eye ſhall ſee him.* And to call the Ear, and make it attentive; *The Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from Heaven, with the Voice of the Arch-Angel, and with the Trump of God.* 1 Theſſ. 4. 16. How circumſpect ſhould we be in all our Ways, ſince every Action ſhall be reviewed by our Judg? St. *Peter* ſtrongly infers from the diſſolution of the World, as a moſt cogent Argument, that we ſhould be exactly and univerſally Holy: *Seeing then all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved,* 2 Pet. 3. 11,

what

what manner of Perſons ought we to be in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs? But the conſideration of the eternal Judgment immediately ſucceeding the deſtruction of the World; O how powerful ſhould it be upon Conſcience and the Affections to regulate the whole courſe of our Lives with a final reſpect to God's Tribunal?

In ſhort, That which we read of the ſucceſs of the Apoſtle's preaching to the Athenians upon the preſent Subject, the Immortality of the Soul, compriſed in the Reſurrection of the Body and the future Judgment, is the ſame in all times and places: *And when they heard of the Reſurrection of the Dead, ſome mocked; and others ſaid, We will hear thee again of this matter; and others believed.* Acts 17.32,34. There are three Differences of the Hearers of this Doctrine of ſo great importance: ſome deride it as an extravagant Fancy; ſome believe it, and yield up themſelves entirely in obedience to it; others do not abſolutely reject it, as the firſt, nor accept it, as the ſecond, but have a Conjecture, or ſlight ſuperficial Opinion of it, or a ſpeculative Aſſent as to a hiſtory of things that do not concern them, and defer

the ſerious conſideration and applying of it to themſelves. And of this third ſort (O Grief!) are the moſt of thoſe who are Chriſtians in Name. They delay till Death, the ſolemn reflecting upon the final Judgment, and the inevitable Conſequence of it, a bleſſed or miſerable Eſtate for ever. And whereas the Apoſtle, who had infallible aſſurance of God's Love, did with an holy ſeverity and ſelf-denial abſtain from all carnal Complacencies that might hazard the never-fading Crown; *I keep under my Body, and bring it into ſubjection, leſt by any means when I have preached to others, I ſhould be a Caſtaway.* * Yet the moſt live and die in a ſecure ſtate, without preparation to appear before the Preſence of his Glory.

1 Cor. 9. 27.

* Væ miſeris nobis qui de electione noſtra nullam adhuc Dei vocem cognovimus, & jam in otio quaſi de ſecuritate torpemus. *Greg.* lib. 30. Moral.

FINIS.

OF HEAVEN.

BY

WILLIAM BATES, D.D.

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OF HEAVEN.

Pſalm 16. 11. *Thou wilt ſhew me the Path of Life: in thy Preſence is fulneſs of Joy, at thy right Hand there are Pleaſures for evermore.*

THE Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs was pleaſed, before and during the legal Diſpenſation, by various Predictions and Types to delineate the Perſon of our Redeemer, and the Work of Redemption, to prepare the Minds of Men for his Reception at his coming into the World. All the Evangelical Prophecies recorded in the Old Teſtament, as diſperſed Rays, are

are conſpicuouſly united in him, *the Sun of Righteouſneſs*; and as in a curious Piece of Moſaick Work, each Stone according to its natural Vein and Colour is ſo exactly diſpoſed, and with that proportion join'd to another, that the lively Figure of the Humane Body, reſults from the Compoſure; ſo by variety of Types, the intire Image of our Saviour's Life is repreſented from his firſt appearing on Earth, to his aſcending to Heaven.

Now the due comparing and obſerving the harmonious Agreement between the Propheſies and Types of the Old Teſtament, and the Hiſtory of the New, is a powerful means to produce and eſtabliſh a true lively Faith in the bleſſed Jeſus as the promiſed *Meſſiah*: For it is an infallible Argument of the Divine Providence in diſpoſing Times and Things ſo, as the Oracle ſhould be verified in the Event, and the myſterious Figures ſubſtantially exhibited in the manifeſtation of the Son of God. 'Tis true, his Miracles raiſed Admiration, and argued the concurrence of Power truly Divine: For the exerciſe of an abſolute Dominion over the Order of Nature, is a Royalty reſerved

ved to God: but that his miraculous Operations were foretold, added more Authority to his Perſon, and Efficacy to his Doctrine. Therefore our Saviour himſelf, in anſwer to the publick Queſtion ſent from *John the Baptiſt*, whether he were the expected Saviour of the World, commanded the Meſſengers to tell him what they heard and ſaid, *The Blind receive their Sight, and the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleanſed, the Deaf hear, and the Dead are raiſed up:* Which healing Miracles were foretold by the Prophet *Eſay*, as the clear and diſtinguiſhing Characters of the *Meſſiah* from all Seducers, when he ſhould come. The fulfilling God's Word by the Works of Chriſt, of which there was ſenſible evidence, was an irrefutable teſtimony that his Miracles were true, and performed for the confirmation of the Truth.

Matth. 11.

Iſa. 35.

Now of all the choſen Saints that foretold the coming of Chriſt, the new Law of Grace, and the new Kingdom of Glory, that he ſhould reveal and eſtabliſh: Of all that repreſented him in various Particularities, concerning his Perſon and Offices, there was not a more illuſtrious Type than *David*,

Illorum hominum non tantum lingua ſed & vita prophetica fuit. *Aug.*

David, that by prophetical Words, and by prophetical Actions did ſo clearly deſcribe him.

In this Pſalm compoſed by him, there is a mixture of Hiſtory and Prophecy: Some things in the literal and immediate ſenſe referring to *David*: *I have ſet the Lord always before me; becauſe he is at my right hand, I ſhall not be moved.* Our being at God's right Hand, implies the higheſt Honour; his being at our right Hand, implies preſent and ſure protection and defence. And of this *David* had the infallible Promiſe of God to ſecure his Hope, notwithſtanding all his unrighteous and implacable Enemies. But the following Verſes are applicable to *David* but in a lower ſenſe, and by a remote Metaphor, and have their literal and principal Accompliſhment in our Saviour. *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell*, that is, in the State of the Dead; *nor ſuffer thy holy One to ſee Corruption*: that is, the Body of our Saviour ſhould be exempted from the corrupting Power of the Grave, and reſtored the third Day to Life. In this propriety and perfection of ſenſe, the Prophecy is applyed by St. *Peter* to our Saviour's alone: for *David*

David died *and ſaw Corruption*; and his Body ſtill remains under the Dominion of Death. And this laſt Verſe, *Thou wilt ſhew me the Path of Life: in thy Preſente is fulneſs of Joy, at thy right Hand are Pleaſures for evermore*; is applied by the Apoſtle to Chriſt, his Reſurrection, Aſcenſion to Heaven, *and ſitting at the right Hand of the Majeſty on high. Thou wilt ſhew me the Path of Life*; that is, introduce him into the Kingdom of Glory, and by experimental Fruition make him partaker of it: *In thy Preſence is fulneſs of Joy, at thy right Hand are Pleaſures for evermore.* Acts 2 27, 29.

In theſe words the Cauſes and Excellencies of the Heavenly Life are expreſs'd. The Cauſes, are the glorious Preſence of God, and the intimate application of his Preſence, and diſcovery of his peculiar Love to the Saints. This our bleſſed Saviour had reſpect to, as the compleat Reward of his Sufferings; *Thou ſhalt make me full of Joy with thy Countenance.* And *his right Hand* implies his Bounty that diſpenſes, and his Power that ſecures our Happineſs. The Excellencies of it, are

are *fulneſs of Joy, and Pleaſures for evermore.*

From the words I ſhall obſerve one Propoſition.

The enjoyment of the Divine Preſence in Heaven, is the ſupream and everlaſting Felicity of the Saints.

In the diſcourſing of this Point, I will conſider,

Firſt, The Place wherein the Divine Preſence is glorioufly reveal'd.

Secondly, Shew that the enjoyment of the Divine Preſence is the ſupream Felicity of the Saints.

Thirdly, Prove that the Felicity ſhall be Everlaſting.

Firſt, The Place wherein the Divine Preſence is revealed. 'Tis conſiſtent with the Divine Immenſity, to be differently preſent in ſome places. The eſſential Preſence of God is the ſame every where; the influxive declarative Preſence of God is ſpecial, and other-

wiſe in one place than another. He is more excellently preſent in the living Temples, his Saints on Earth, by the gracious and eminent Operations of his Spirit, than he is in the reſt of the World: He is moſt excellently preſent in Heaven, by the cleareſt Manifeſtation, and the expreſs Characters and Effects of the Divine Perfections.

This inferior World is fram'd with exquiſite Order; *The Earth is full of the Glory of the Lord:* yet 'tis but the Sediment of the Creation, the Habitation of Birds and Beaſts, nay of rebellious Sinners: And by this we may raiſe our Thoughts to conceive ſomething of the glorious Sanctuary of Life and Bleſſedneſs above. 'Tis called the *Heaven of Heavens*, which is the higheſt Compariſon to inſtruct and aſtoniſh us with the Amplitude and Glory of the Place. 'Tis a Place becoming the Majeſty of God, the Image of his Immenſity. Our Saviour aſſures us, *In his Father's Houſe are many Manſions*, to receive the innumerable company of glorified Saints. 'Tis called *the Excellent Glory*, 2 Pet. 1. 17.

The ſhining Firmament, with all the Luminaries that adorn it, are but

the Frontiſpiece to the higheſt Heaven. All the Luſtre of Diamonds, the Fire of Carbuncles and Rubies, the Brightneſs of Pearls are dead in compariſon of its Glory. *'Tis the Throne of the God of Glory*, wherein his Majeſty is reveal'd in the moſt illuſtrious manner. For Pleaſantneſs 'tis call'd *Paradiſe*, in alluſion to the delightful Garden planted by the Hands of God himſelf for *Adam*, his Favourite, whilſt innocent. There is *the Tree of Life*. There are Rivers of Pleaſure ſpringing from the Divine Preſence. *'Tis call'd the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*; to ſignify the Glory and Joy of the Place; for Light has ſplendour, and conciliates chearfulneſs, and is a fit Emblem of both. As on the contrary, Hell is deſcribed *by the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever:* to ſignify the ſadneſs and deſpair of the Damned; and becauſe in that centre of Miſery, a perpetual Night and invincible Darkneſs increaſes the horror of loſt Souls.

Heaven for ſtability is *called a City that has Foundations, whoſe Builder and Maker is God.* The preſent World is like a Tent or Tabernacle ſet up for a time, whilſt the Church is paſſing through

through the Wilderneſs: but Heaven is the *City of the Living God*, the Place of his happy Reſidence, the Seat of his eternal Empire. The viſible World, with all its periſhing Idols, ſhall ſhortly fall, this Beautiful Scene ſhall be aboliſh'd: but the ſupreme Heaven is above this Sphere of mutability, wherein all Bodies compounded of the jarring Elements are continually changing and diſſolving: 'tis truly call'd *a Kingdom that cannot be ſhaken*. Briefly, the wiſe Maker has fram'd it correſpondently to the end for which it was deſigned: 'tis the Seat of his Majeſty, his Sacred Temple, wherein he diffuſes the richeſt Beams of his Goodneſs and Glory, and his choſen Servants ſee and praiſe his adorable Excellencies for ever.

Secondly, I will endeavour to ſhew, that the enjoyment of the Divine Preſence in Heaven, is the ſupreme Felicity of the Saints.

To make this ſupernatural Bleſſedneſs more eaſy and intelligible to us, the Scripture deſcribes it by ſenſible Repreſentations. For while the Soul is clothed with Fleſh, Fancy has ſuch

a dominion, that we conceive of nothing but by Compariſons and Images taken from material things. 'Tis
Rev. 17. 7. therefore ſet forth by *a Marriage-Feaſt*, to ſignify the Joy and Glory of the Saints above. But to prevent all groſs Conceits, we are inſtructed, that the Bodies of the Saints ſhall be ſpiritual, not capable of Hunger or Thirſt, nor conſequently of any Refreſhment that is cauſed by the ſatisfaction of thoſe Appetites. The Objects of the moſt noble Senſes, Seeing and Hearing, the pleaſure of which is mixed with Reaſon, and not common to the Brutes, are more frequently made uſe of to reconcile the bleſſed and Heavenly State to the proportion of our Minds. Thus ſometimes the Saints above are *repreſented on Thrones, and with Crowns on their Heads: Sometimes clothed in White, with Palms in their Hands: ſometimes ſinging Songs of Triumph to him that ſits on the Throne.* But the real Felicity of the Saints infinitely exceeds all thoſe faint Metaphors. The Apoſtle, to whom the admirable Revelation was exhibited, of the Sufferings of the Church, and the victorious iſſue out of them in the ſucceſſive Ages

Ages of the World, tells us, *it does not appear what the Saints ſhall be in Heaven. The things that God has prepared for thoſe that love him,* are far more above the higheſt aſcent of our Thoughts, than the Marriage-Feaſt of a King exceeds in ſplendor and Magnificence, the Imagination of one that has always lived in an obſcure Village, and never ſaw any Ornaments of State, nor taſted Wine in his Life. We can think of thoſe things but according to the Poverty of our Underſtandings. But ſo much we know as is able to ſweeten all the Bitterneſs, and render inſipid all the Sweetneſs of this World.

This will appear by conſidering whatever is requiſite to conſtitute the compleat Bleſſedneſs of Man, is fully enjoyed in the Divine Preſence.

1. An exemption from all Evils is the firſt condition of perfect Bleſſedneſs. The Sentence of the wiſe *Solon* is true,

Dicique beatus
Ante obitum nemo ſupremaque funera debet.

No Man can be call'd happy whilſt in this Valley of Tears. There are ſo many natural Calamities, ſo many caſual, which no humane Mind can foreſee or prevent, that one may be leſs miſerable than another, but none perfectly happy here. But upon the entrance into Heaven, all thoſe Evils, that by their number, variety or weight, diſquiet and oppreſs us here, are at an end.

Sin, of all Evils, the worſt and moſt hateful, ſhall be aboliſh'd, and all Temptations that ſurround us and endanger our Innocence ſhall ceaſe. Here the beſt Men lament the Weakneſs of the Fleſh, and ſometimes the violent Aſſaults of Spiritual Enemies. St. *Paul* himſelf breaks forth into a mournful Complaint, *O wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this Body of Death?* And when harraſs'd by the buffets of Satan, renews his moſt earneſt Addreſſes to God to be freed from them. Here our Purity is not abſolute, we muſt be always cleanſing our ſelves from the Reliques of that deep Defilement that cleaves to our Nature. Here our Peace is preſerv'd with the Sword in our Hand, by

by a continual warfare againſt Satan and the World. But in Heaven no Ignorance darkens the Mind, no Paſſions rebel againſt the ſanctified Will, no Inherent Pollution remains. *The Church is without Spot or Wrinkle, or any ſuch thing.* And all Temptations ſhall then ceaſe. The Tempter was caſt out of Heaven, and none of his poiſon'd Arrows can reach that purified Company. Glorious Liberty! here ardently deſir'd, but fully enjoyed by the Saints above. And as Sin, ſo all the penal Conſequences of it are quite taken away. The preſent Life is a continual diſeaſe, and ſometimes attended with that ſharp ſenſe, that Death is deſir'd as a remedy, and accepted as a Benefit. And though the Saints have reviving Cordials, yet their Joys are mix'd with Sorrows, nay cauſed by Sorrows. The tears of Repentance are their ſweeteſt refreſhment. Here the living Stones are cut and wounded, and made fit by ſufferings for a Temple unto God in the new *Jeruſalem.* But as in building of *Solomon*'s Temple, the noiſe of a Hammer was not heard, for all the parts were fram'd before with that exact

deſign and correſpondence, that they firmly combin'd together. They were hewen in another place, and nothing remain'd but the putting them one upon another, and then as Sacred they became inviolable. So God the wiſe Architect, having prepar'd the Saints here, by many cutting Afflictions, places them in the eternal Building, where no Voice of Sorrow is heard. Of the innumerable Aſſembly above; is there any Eye that weeps, any Breaſt that ſighs, any Tongue that complains, or any appearance of Grief? The Heavenly State is called Life, as only worthy of that Title. There is no infirmity of Body, no Poverty, no Diſgrace, no Treachery of Friends, no perſecution of Enemies. *There is no more Death, nor Sorrow; nor ſhall there be any more Pain: for former things are paſt away. God will wipe away all Tears from the Eyes of his People.* There Salvation is compleat in all degrees. Pure Joy is the Priviledge of Heaven, unmixed Sorrows the Puniſhment of Hell.

2. A concurrence of all poſitive Excellencies is requiſite to Bleſſedneſs, And theſe are to be conſidered with reſpect

reſpect to the entire Man.

1. The Body ſhall be awak'd out of its dead Sleep, and quicken'd into a glorious immortal Life. The Soul and Body are the eſſential parts of Man; and though the inequality be great in their holy Operations, yet their concourſe is neceſſary. Good Actions are deſign'd by the counſel and reſolution of the Spirit, but perform'd by the miniſtry of the Fleſh. Every Grace expreſſes it ſelf in viſible Actions by the Body. In the Sorrows of Repentance it ſupplies Tears; in religious Faſts, its Appetites are reſtrain'd; in Thankſgivings the Tongue breaks forth into the joyful Praiſes of God. All our Victories over ſenſible Pleaſure and Pain, are obtain'd by the Soul in conjunction with the Body. Now 'tis moſt becoming the Divine Goodneſs, not to deal ſo differently, that the Soul ſhould be everlaſtingly happy, and the Body loſt in forgetfulneſs; the one glorified in Heaven, the other remain in the Duſt. From their firſt ſetting out in the World to the Grave, they ran the ſame race, and ſhall enjoy the ſame Reward. Here the Body is the Conſort

Conſort of the Soul, in Obedience and Sufferings, hereafter in Fruition. When the Crown of Purity, or Palm of Martyrdom ſhall be given by the great Judg in the view of all, they ſhall both partake in the Honour. The Apoſtle aſſures us, the Bodies of the Saints ſhall be revived and refin'd to a ſpiritual and glorious Perfection. *Fleſh and Blood*, the Body with its tetrene *Qualities*, is mutable and mortal, and *cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven*; it cannot breath in ſo pure an Air. *God tells* Moſes, *No Man can ſee my Face and live:* The ſight of the Divine Glory is not conſiſtent with ſuch temper'd frail Tabernacles of Fleſh. Nay, the Body muſt be freed from the innocent Infirmities that were inſeparable from *Adam* in Paradiſe: for *he was made a living Soul*, i. e. the Soul united to the Body was the Fountain of the natural ſenſitive Life, which was in a perpetual Flux, the vital Heat waſting the radical Moiſture, from whence there was a neceſſity of Food and Sleep to repair the Subſtance and Spirits, and preſerve his Life in vigour: but in the Divine World, the Body ſhall be ſpiritual in

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its Qualities and the Principle of its Life: it ſhall be ſupported by the ſupernatural Power of the Spirit, without the ſupplies of outward nouriſhment, and exempted from all the low Operations of Nature: therefore our Saviour tells us, *the Children of the Reſurrection ſhall be equal to the Angels*, prepar'd for the employment and Enjoyments of thoſe bleſſed Spirits.

And a ſubſtantial unfading Glory will ſhine in them infinitely above the periſhing Pride of this World, *and the Glory of the Fleſh*, that is but an appearance, like the falſe Colours painted on the Feathers of a Dove, by the reflection of the Light, which preſently vaniſhes, when the Poſture is chang'd, or the Light withdrawn. Of this we have a ſure Pledg in the glorified Body of Chriſt, who is the *firſt Fruits of them that ſleep*; *He ſhall change our vile Bodies, that they may be faſhion'd like to his glorious Body, according to the working of his Power, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf.* What can be more glorious, than to be conform'd to the humanity of the Son of God? This Conformity ſhall be the Work of his own Hands:

and

and when Omnipotence interpoſes, nothing is difficult. The raiſing the Body to an immortal ſtate of Glory, is as eaſy to the Divine Power, as the forming it firſt in the Womb. As the Sun labours no more in the Mines, in the forming Gold and Silver, the moſt precious and durable Metals, than in the production of a ſhort-liv'd Flower.

2. The ſupream happineſs of Man is in the Soul's Communion with God. This will appear by conſidering the principal Ingredients of Happineſs: they are the excellence of the Object, and the vigour of the Actings upon it. The Life and Bleſſedneſs of God, is to know and love himſelf, according to his infinite Perfections. And 'tis the higheſt happineſs of the reaſonable Creature to know and love God. For he is a ſpiritual infinite, unchangeable Good, and can fully communicate all that is requiſite to intire Bleſſedneſs, Supply all the Wants, and ſatisfy all the Wiſhes of the immortal Soul. The Underſtanding and Will are our moſt comprehenſive Faculties, the principles of our moſt eminent Operations.

rations. To know and to love are eſſential to the reaſonable Soul, and in directing thoſe Acts upon God, the Rectitude, the Perfection and Felicity of Man conſiſts. As the intellectual Creature by ſetting its Mind and Heart upon earthly things, is degraded into a lower order, the thoughts and deſires that are ſpiritual with reſpect to the principle from whence they proceed, are ſenſual and periſhing with reſpect to their Objects: So when our noble faculties are exercis'd in their moſt lively and vigorous perceptions upon the ſupream Good, Man is advanc'd to an equality of Joy and Perfection with the Angels. Now in Heaven, God by his moſt evident and effectual preſence, excites and draws forth all the active Powers of the Soul in their higheſt degrees; and ſuch is the immenſity of his Perfections, fills their utmoſt Capacity, from whence a Divine pleaſure, a perpetual Satifaction ſprings, a Joy that is as unſpeakable as 'tis eternal.

To unfold this more particularly.

1. The Underſtanding ſhall clearly ſee the moſt excellent Objects. *Now*

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1 Cor. 13. *we know but in part.* The naked Beauty of divine Things is vail'd, and of impoſſible diſcovery: and by natural or accidental weakneſs, the Mind is not proportionable to ſuſtain that dazling brightneſs. *But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away.* In that inlightned the State, manifeſtation of the Objects ſhall abundantly exceed the cleareſt revealing of them here. And the Underſtanding ſhall be prepar'd in proportion to take a full view of them. Therefore the Apoſtle compares the ſeveral Periods of the Church in reſpect of the degrees of Knowledg, to the ſeveral Ages of humane Life. *When I was a Child, I ſpoke as a Child, I underſtood as a Child, I thought as a Child: but when I became a Man, I put away Childiſh things.* In Children the Organs, either from the exceſs of moiſture, or their ſmalneſs, are indiſpos'd for the vigorous exerciſe of the Mind: ſome ſtrictures of Reaſon appear, a preſaging ſign what will be, but mix'd with much obſcurity. But when the Organs are come to their juſt proportion and temperament, the Soul diſplays its ſtrength and activity. To

To explicate this, it is requiſite to conſider the expreſſions in Scripture, that ſignify the eminent degrees of Knowledg in the Bleſſed. Our Saviour aſſures us, that *the Pure in Heart ſhall ſee God.* Sight is the moſt noble, extenſive, and affective Senſe, and therefore fit to notify the clear, ſweet and ſatisfying intuition of God in Heaven. 'Tis true, the Deity is ſpiritual and inviſible to the Eye of the Body, infinite and incomprehenſible to the Eye of the Soul; but the glorified Saints ſo clearly underſtand the Divine Perfections, that our preſent knowledg of God, compar'd to that Viſion, is but as the ſeeing of a dark Shadow in a Glaſs, to the immediate view of the living Subſtance and Perſon. The diſcovery of the Deity to us in the preſent ſtate, is by his Works and Word: and both are imperfect, and far inferiour to the manifeſtation in Heaven. The abſolute fulneſs of Perfection that is inſeparable from the Godhead, is inimitable by any Creature; for the Perfection of any Creature is limited in its kind as well as degrees. Therefore God was pleaſed by variety of effects and reſemblances,

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to expreſs and repreſent his Attributes, that our Minds might aſcend by thoſe ſteps to contemplate thoſe Perfections that are in him eminently and beyond all compariſon. The Light of Heaven in all its purity and luſtre, is but a ſhadow of his unapproachable Brightneſs: all the Excellencies of viſible things are but a weak repreſentation of the Glory of his Atrributes, like the deſcribing with a Coal the beautiful Colours of the Morning: and compar'd with the immenſity of his Perfections, are like the deſcribing in a ſheet of Paper the vaſt Celeſtial Spheres.

In his Word there is a more clear and full diſcovery of his Nature and Will, but according to our capacity of receiving. The Divine Attributes in Scripture are mask'd and ſhadowed under ſenſible Compariſons: for no Light ſhines into our Minds here but through the Windows of Senſe. The intellectual Powers depend, as to the firſt notices of things, upon the lower Faculties and Senſes: therefore as *Eliſha* in reviving the *Shunamite*'s Child, contracted himſelf to the proportion of the Child, and *put his Mouth upon his Mouth*,

Mouth, and his Eyes upon his Eyes, and his Hands upon his Hands; ſo God is pleaſed to condeſcend to our Capacity, and to adapt the Expreſſions of his Majeſty to the narrowneſs of our Imaginations. But in Heaven the Revelation of the Deity is much more glorious: and the Mind is clarified from thoſe terrene Images that flow through the groſs Channels of the Senſes. In this preſent ſtate our pureſt Conceptions of God are mix'd with Droſs, and very imperfect; but there the Gold ſhall be ſeparated from the Droſs, and our Conceptions be more proper and becoming the Simplicity and Purity of God. Here the Objects of Glory are humbled to the perception of Senſe: Hereafter, the ſenſible Faculties ſhall be raiſed and refin'd, and made the Subjects of Glory. Now when Divine Light ſhines with direct Beams, and the thick Curtain of Fleſh is ſpiritualiz'd and tranſparent, the Soul enjoys the cleareſt Viſion of God. The Light of Nature was ſo defective as to the diſcovery of God's Compaſſionate Counſels to ſave the loſt World; and the Minds of Men were ſo darkned from the Fumes of their Luſts,

that that Light was but the Hemiſphere of the Night in compariſon of the Revelation of the Goſpel: as St. *Peter* expreſſes the happy Priviledg of Chriſtians, and their conſequent Duty, *that they ſhould ſhew forth the Praiſes of him who hath called them out of Darkneſs into his marvellous Light.* And the *Glorious Goſpel* compar'd to the Revelation of God in Heaven, is but as the Twilight of the Morning, wherein the Light of the Day is checker'd with the Shadows of the Night, to the Sun in its full Luſtre. In Heaven we ſhall *ſee God Face to Face:* which ſignifies the cleareſt manifeſtation of his Glory, and of his Favour to the Bleſſed: for the Face is the Throne of Majeſty and Beauty, and the Chryſtal wherein the Affections are conſpicuous. Accordingly when *Moſes* prayed, *I beſeech thee ſhew me thy Glory*; God anſwered him, it was impoſſible, *for no Man could ſee his Face, and live.* And the form of Divine Bleſſing to the People of *Iſrael* was, The *Lord make his Face to ſhine upon thee, and be gracious to thee.* Whether the immediate Eſſence of God can be ſeen by the intellectual Creature, is a queſtion, but we are ſure in

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the Heaven of Preſence, God exhibits himſelf to the Bleſſed in a moſt glorious manner: for according to the degrees of Excellency in the Work, ſuch are the Impreſſions and Diſcoveries of the Cauſe. Now all groſs material things in the low order of Nature, are but weak reſultances from his Perfections, in compariſon of their glorious Effects in the Divine World. The Glories of the Place, and of the Inhabitants the Angels and Saints, are the moſt noble Effects and Expreſſions of the Divine Attributes. But in a tranſcendent manner God exhibits himſelf in the glorified Mediator. He is ſtiled *the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon*; to ſignify that God, in the Perſon of the incarnate Mediator, is ſo fully repreſented to us, that in him we have a view of God's unchangeable Perfections. This appears by the following words, *that having purged us from our Sins, he ſat down on the Majeſty on high*: for they reſpect the Son of God as united to the Humane Nature, in which he performed the Office of the Prieſthood, and took poſſeſſion of his Kingdom. During his humble State,

tho darken'd with many afflicting Circumſtances, the Divine Vertues, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Holineſs, Power, were ſo viſible in his Life, Revelations, and miraculous Works, that when *Philip* with that ardency of Affection, deſir'd the ſight of the Father, the only conſummate Bleſſedneſs, *ſhew us the Father, and it ſuffices:* He told him, He *that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.* But how brightly do they appear in his Exaltation? We ſhall *ſee him as he is*; in the Majeſty and Glory of the Son of God. The Apoſtle ſays, *We ſhall know as we are known:* This we are not to underſtand according to the exactneſs of the Expreſſion; for the Sun may be as well included in a ſpark of Fire, as God may be comprehended by our finite Faculties. Beyond the fulleſt diſcoveries we can receive of the Deity, there remains an intire infinity of Perfections, not to be known by the moſt intelligent Spirits: but *as we are known*, is a note of Similitude, not of Equality. The Light of a Candle as truly ſhines as the Light of the Sun, but not with that extent and ſplendor. We ſhall have ſuch a perfect knowledg of God, as our Minds can receive, and our Hearts deſire. We

We ſhall then ſee what we now believe concerning the glorious Nature of God, his Decrees and Counſels, his Providence and Diſpenſations. The ſublimeſt Doctrine of the Chriſtian Religion, above the diſquiſition and reach of Reaſon, is that of the Sacred Trinity, upon which the whole Oeconomy of the Goſpel depends. In aſſenting to this, Faith bows the Head and adores. But ſuch is the pride of the Carnal Mind, that it diſdains to ſtoop to Divine Revelation: and the ſeeming wiſe Philoſophers deſpiſed the Primitive Chriſtians as Captives of a blind Belief. But this foul Reproach was as unjuſt as many others wherewith they deſigned to diſgrace Chriſtianity; for the humility of Faith does not extinguiſh or darken the Light of Reaſon, but revives and increaſes it: what is more ſuitable to uncorrupt Reaſon, than to believe the Revelation God affords of his own Nature who cannot deceive us? In the State above, where reaſon is rectified and inlarged, we ſhall underſtand that from Eternity God was ſole exiſting, but not ſolitary; that the Godhead is not confus'd in Unity, nor divided in number; that

there is a priority of Order, but no ſuperiority among the Sacred Perſons, but they are all equally poſſeſs'd of the ſame Divine Excellencies, and the ſame Divine Empire, and are the Object of the ſame Divine Adoration. Our Saviour tells his Diſciples, *In that Day ye ſhall know, that I am in the Father*, that is by unity of Eſſence, and as naturally and neceſſarily God as the Father. This Promiſe immediately refers to the time of pouring forth the Holy Ghoſt upon them, after the Reſurrection of our Saviour, but ſhall be fully accompliſh'd in Heaven.

All things of a ſupernatural Order ſhall be reveal'd. The *great Myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſt in the Fleſh*, the union of the high Perfections of the Divine Nature, with the innocent Imperfections of the Humane Nature, the contrivance of our Redemption, wherein there is an harmonious concurrence and concord of the principal Attributes of the Deity that ſeem'd irreconcileable: that product of the Divine Wiſdom that is ſo ador'd by the Angels, that aſtoniſhes and ſaves us, ſhall be unfolded. The Divine Counſels in governing the World, the Deſigns,

ſigns, the Ways, the Orders and Operations of God's Providence ſhall be conſpicuous. In ſome Diſpenſations of God, we diſcern the Eye in the top of his Scepter: the Wiſdom, the Rectitude, the equity of his Providence is ſo viſible in the defence of the Innocent, and his Juſtice and Power in the puniſhment of the Guilty, that it may convince the Atheiſts who deny a Providence, and cauſes all ſincere Believers to admire and reverence it. But there are other Diſpenſations, the immediate Reaſons of which are ſo conceal'd in the Boſom of God, that only the Lamb with whoſe Blood the Elect to Glory are written in the Book of Life, can reveal: Why the Light of the Goſpel was never viſible to ſo many Kingdoms; *why many are called, and few choſen*, the unſearchable Ways, and incomprehenſible Judgments of God, which St. *Paul* in an extaſy admires, which 'tis not lawful to inquire in here, we ſhall then underſtand in ſuch a manner, that Light it ſelf is not more clear. How often are the People of God here in miſerable Perplexities? and ſay with the Prophets, *Verily thou art a God that hideſt thy ſelf, O God of*

Iſrael *the Saviour!* 'Tis true a ſtedfaſt Faith in the Providence of God, that all that he does, and all that he permits and diſpoſes is beſt, will quiet their Paſſions, and change the tempeſtuous Ocean into the pacifick-Sea: but when they are admitted into the Council of State above, and ſee the immediate Reaſons of his Decrees, what a heavenly Wonder, what an exquiſite Pleaſure will fill their Minds? when the original Fountains of Wiſdom, as clear as deep, ſhall be open'd, what ſweet Satisfaction will be ſhed abroad in their Spirits? They will ſee the Beauty of Providence in diſpoſing temporal Evils in order to their eternal Felicity: that as in a curious Picture the darkeſt Tinctures are ſo diſpos'd, as to give Life and Grace to the orient Colours: So all the Afflictions of this State were but ſhadows or foiles, to make their Faith, and Love, and Patience more reſplendent, and their Reward more excellent. What our Saviour ſaid to *Peter*, is applicable to the impenetrable diſpenſations of Providence to us in our mortal State: *What I do, thou knoweſt not now, but ſhall know hereafter;* then

then the *Arcana Imperii*, the Secrets of his Counſels, ſhall be unſealed, and we ſhall be able to expound the perplexing Riddle, how *out of the Eater came Meat, and out of the Strong came Sweetneſs:* we ſhall underſtand that his over-ruling Providence is moſt eminently glorified in extracting Good out of Evil; *for we ſhall know as we are known.*

2. I will conſider the bleſſed Effects of the Viſion of God in Heaven upon the Saints. Our Saviour tells us, *This is Life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* The beginning and introduction of our Felicity, is by a lively Faith here, the conſummation of it is by preſent ſight in Heaven. From the Viſion of his Glory, there will be a reſultance of his likeneſs impreſt on us. *We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* All the Perfection and Happineſs of the Saints is compriſed in that Promiſe. The Sun, when the Sky is clear and ſerene, forms its Image on a Cloud temper'd to receive it, with that orient brightneſs, that the Eye cannot diſtinguiſh between the Copy and the Original.

Thus

Thus the uncreated Sun by powerful emanations transforms the Soul into its likeneſs, in that divine Degree of Holineſs and Felicity, as glorioufly reſembles God. *Moſes* by converſing with God in the Mount, and ſeeing his back-parts, return'd to the *Iſraelites* with ſuch a radiancy in his Face; that they could not look on it without a Vail. What an impreſſion of Glory is in the Saints, who ſee his Perfections in their infinite luſtre? 'Tis the priviledge of Chriſtians in this Life, above the Church under the Law, *They behold in the Goſpel as in a Glaſs, the Glory of the Lord, and are chang'd into the ſame Image, from Glory to Glory:* they become more Holy and Heavenly, more purified and adorn'd with his Vertues and Graces. Now if the Viſion of Chriſt here in a Glaſs, an eclipſing Medium, be ſo influxive upon Believers, what an illuſtrious and infallible efficacy has the immediate, clear, and permanent view of his Glory upon the Saints in Heaven? That ſight is productive and conſervative of his Image in its purity and perfection for ever.

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The Divine Preſence affects the Saints with the moſt humble reverence and ſolemn veneration of God. This is an eternal reſpect due from the intellectual Creature to the Creatour, upon the account of his infinite and incommunicable Excellencies. He is diſtinguiſh'd not only from Idols, but from Creatures of the higheſt Order, by his eſſential ſupreme, and ſingular Name, *I AM*. Every kind of Being, every ſpark of Life, every degree of Perfection is from his Efficiency, and depends entirely upon his ſupporting Power. The moſt eminent Qualities of the Creatures are but in ſhow and appearance, compar'd with the reality and ſtability of his glorious Nature. In the Scripture, Wiſdom, Holineſs, Goodneſs, Power, Truth, Immortality, are attributed to God, with the excluſion of all Creatures from thoſe Prerogatives; they being his eſſential, infinite and wiſe incomparable Perfections. They are ſeparable Qualities in the Creatures, like the gilding and enamaling of baſer Metal: but in the Deity, they are like ſubſtantial maſſy Gold. There is a vaſt diſtance between

tween created Beings; but the Diſtance between a Fly, or a Worm, and an Angel, is nothing to the diſtance between an Arch-angel and God: there being no compariſon between finite and infinite. All Creatures equally vaniſh, and diſappear as nothing compar'd to the glorious Creatour. As if one from the Region of the Stars ſhould look down upon the Earth, the Mountains and Hills with the Vallies, would appear one flat Surface, an equal Plain, the height and the lowneſs of the ſeveral parts being indiſcernible at that immenſe diſtance.

Now in Heaven the Divine Majeſty is moſt viſible and moſt awful and adorable. The ſublimeſt Spirits *cover their Faces* before his glorious Brightneſs. The Prophet *Iſaiah* had a repreſentation of Heaven: *I ſaw the Lord ſitting upon a Throne high and lifted up, and his Train filled the Temple. Above it ſtood the Seraphims: each one had ſix Wings: With twain he cover'd his Face, with twain he cover'd his Feet, with twain he did fly. And one cried to another, and ſaid Holy, holy, holy Lord of Hoſts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory.* They highly honour

nour him, by the reflection of his ſeparate and peerleſs Excellencies, his Almighty Power, his Infinite Supremacy and Eternal Empire, in their conſert of Praiſes.

This is the principal Duty of Angels and Men to the bleſſed Creator for his admirable Perfections, and his excellent Benefits. The Evidence of it is ſo entire, that the reaſonable Mind cannot ſuſpend its Aſſent: for Goodneſs and Beauty, the Fruit and the Flower of amiable Things, do ſo recommend them to the Underſtanding and Will, that they powerfully allure and engage the Affections. Now theſe are in God in unſpeakable degrees of Eminence. The Prophet breaks out in a rapture, *How great is his Goodneſs, how great is his Beauty!*

'Twas a Precept of the Ceremonial Law, that the Firſtlings of the Flock, and the firſt and beſt Fruits of the Earth ſhould be offer'd to God; not as if the firſt that open'd the Belly was more valuable in his Account than the laſt, or the moſt early Fruits in the Spring more pleaſing to him than the later in the Autumn; but 'twas inſtructive, that our Love, the *firſt born*

of

of the Soul, and the beginning of its ſtrength, ſhould be conſecrated to God.

2. In Heaven the Saints as perfectly love God as they know him. The Love of God is the Eſſential Character of a Saint, that diſtinguiſhes him from the Unregenerate. Indeed, it is ſtrange that God, who is infinitely lovely, and infinitely liberal and beneficent, ſhould not prevail on the Hearts of all Men; but if we conſider the degeneracy of Mankind, how their Minds are depraved and deceived, and their Affections are vitiated, the Wonder will ceaſe. Carnal Men have not due Conceptions of God, and will not attentively obſerve his amiable Perfections. St. *John* tells us, *He that loveth not, doth not know God.* Knowledg is the leading Principle in the Operations of the Soul. There muſt be a heavenly Eye to diſcover the heavenly Beauty, before there can be love of it. Now Men are in ignorant darkneſs, and are defiled in Fleſh and Spirit, and therefore cannot love God who is glorious in Holineſs. Without reſemblance there can be no affectionate Union, which is the Eſſence of Love. The contrariety of

of Diſpoſitions infers a contrariety of Affections. The Scripture expreſſes this in dreadful Colours: *The carnal Mind is enmity againſt God: the Friendſhip of the World is enmity with God:* that is, Pride, and Covetouſneſs, and Senſuality, which are the Luſts of the Carnal Mind, and are terminated upon worldly Things, are inconſiſtent with the Love of God. The Juſtice of God is terrible to the Conſciences, and his Holineſs odious to the Affections of the Unrenewed; 'Till by Divine Grace the Underſtanding is enlightned and purified to have right apprehenſions of God; till the Will and Affections are cleanſed and changed; till there be a reſemblance of God's holy Nature, and a conformity to his holy Laws, they are not capable of delightful adhering to him, which is the internal eſſential Property of Love.

But thoſe who are partakers of the Divine Nature, the holy and heavenly taſte, and ſee how good the Lord is, and according to the Illuſtrations of the Mind, ſuch are the Impreſſions upon the Heart; the Love of God in their Breaſts here is like ſmoaking Flax, but in Heaven 'tis a trium-

triumphant Flame. God is the firſt Fair, the Original of all amiable Excellencies, in whom they ſhine in their unſtained Luſtre and Perfection; when he fully reveals himſelf, and diſplays the richeſt Beams of his Love and Glory, how tranſporting and endearing is that Sight? Our Affections that are now ſcatter'd on many things, wherein ſome faint Reflections of his Goodneſs appear, ſhall then be united in one full Current to him, *who is all in all.* In Heaven the immenſe Treaſures of his Grace are reveal'd: That when Man for his rebellious Sin was juſtly expell'd from Paradiſe, and under the Sentence of Eternal Death, God ſhould not only pardon, but prefer us to the dignity of his Children, and prepare ſuch a Glory for us, and us for ſuch a Glory. This will inſpire the Saints with ſuch ardent Affections, that will make them equal to the Angels, thoſe pure and everlaſting Flames of Love to God.

In Heaven we ſhall be *with Jeſus the Mediator of the New Covenant, who is ſeated at the right Hand of God.* And how admirable will he appear to the Senſe and Soul of every glorified Saint?

for

for *we ſhall ſee the King in his Beauty.* When our Saviour was upon the Holy Mount, and one vaniſhing Beam of Glory appear'd in his Transfiguration, *Peter* was ſo tranſported at the ſight, that he forgot the World and himſelf: How raviſhing then will the ſight of him in his Triumphant Majeſty be, when we ſhall be transfigur'd our ſelves? Now while Believers are in the ſhadows of the earthly State, they *love their unſeen Saviour* with ſuch intenſe degrees of affection, as deface all the waſhy Colours, all the vain loves of things in this World: but when they are admitted into his ſhining Preſence, and ſee him in the day of Celeſtial Glory; with what an extaſy of Affection will they be tranſported?

We ſhall then feel the endearing Obligations our Saviour has laid upon us, who ranſom'd us with ſo rich a Price, and purchas'd for us ſuch an unvaluable Inheritance. For in proportion as we ſhall underſtand his Greatneſs in himſelf, we ſhall his Goodneſs to us. The Eternal Son of God deſcended from the Heaven of Heavens to our lowly Earth; and which is more, from the Majeſty wherein he there reign'd, and

was viſible to the Angels, he became Man that he might die, to redeem us from the moſt woful Captivity, from *Death, and the ſting of Death, Sin, and the ſtrength of Sin, the Law,* and obtain a bleſſed Life and Immortality for us. O unexampled Love! *Greater Love hath no Man than this, to lay down his Life for his Friend:* And what is the Life of a ſinful Man, a vaniſhing Vapour, a Life mix'd with Troubles and Vexation; and to lay down this for a Friend deſervedly dear, is the higheſt expreſſion of humane Love: But for the Son of God to lay down his Life, a Life without Sin, and without End, for Immortality was a Privilege due to his Innocence, and for Enemies, for the worſt Enemies, Rebels by revolture from obedience to their Creator and King, is a Love truly Divine, and infinitely ſurpaſſing, not only the Affections, but the *underſtanding and knowledg of all Creatures.* Briefly, he gave his Life for us, and gives himſelf to us, the moſt excellent teſtimonies of Love that we can receive from Love it ſelf, and we ſhall love him with all the ſtrength of our glorified Spirits.

Epheſ. 3.

3. Union

3. Union with God by Knowledg and Love, accompliſhes the Perfection and Happineſs of the Saints. The moſt pernicious effect of Sin, is the ſeparation of the Soul from God: and the reſtoral of us to Happineſs, is by reunion with him. This we obtain by Chriſt, who is *Emanuel* in his Nature, and by Office, who took our Fleſh which he offer'd as a Sacrifice to God to atone his Diſpleaſure, and gives his *Spirit to dwell in us*, as a permanent active Principle, by whoſe ſpecial operation Faith is produc'd in our Hearts; that is, ſuch a belief of his Love in redeeming us, as inſpires us with a ſincere and ſuperlative Love to him; and by theſe vital Bands we are united to him, and as his true Members, live the ſame Life with him in Grace and Glory.

Now in Heaven our Union with God is more near and noble, more intimate and influential, more inſeparable and eternal. 'Tis obſervable in natural Cauſalties, that what is of a more refin'd and purer Nature, is more active and penetrating, and more cloſely unites with other things, than what is more groſs and material. Light,

which is the pureſt Quality in the World, actuates all Colours, and makes them viſible, and actuates the Eye, and conveys the lively Image of the Object with ſhining Evidence into it. The Sun ſhoots its inviſible Virtue into the deepeſt Mines. Fire is more ſubtile and pure than Water, and will pierce into ſolid Metals, which the Water cannot ſoak into. The glowing Iron ſeems to be all Fire. Now God is the pureſt Spirit, and of infinite energy, and can unite himſelf to our Spirits, more intimately than the cloſeſt Union between any Creatures in the World. He unites himſelf to the Underſtanding by an immediate irradiation, and diſcovery of his glorious Excellencies. *In thy Light*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *we ſhall ſee Light*. He unites himſelf to the Will, by the infuſion of his Love, and by that, drawing forth our Love to him. This Union is compleat in Heaven, and moſt communicative of the Divine Influences to the Saints, and conſequently their conformity and fruition of God, is in the higheſt degrees that created Spirits are capable of. This is the moſt deſireable and perfect State of reaſonable Creatures; for God is

is the ever-flowing Fountain of Felicity, the only ſtable Center of the Soul, wherein it repoſes it ſelf for ever. Accordingly the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *Return to thy Reſt, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*

When the Soul opens its Eyes to the clear diſcoveries of the firſt Truth, in which is no ſhadow of Error, and its Breaſt to the dear and intimate imbraces of the Supream Good, in which is no mixture of Evil, and beyond which nothing remains to be known, nothing to be enjoy'd, what a Deluge of the pureſt and ſweeteſt Pleaſures will overflow it? We cannot aſcend in our Thoughts ſo high, as to conceive the exceſs of Joy that attends thoſe Operations of the glorified Soul upon its proper Object. But ſomething we may conjecture.

Thoſe who are poſſeſs'd with a noble Paſſion for Knowledg, how do they deſpiſe all lower Pleaſures in compariſon of it? How do they forget themſelves, neglect the Body, and retire into the Mind, the higheſt part of Man, and neareſt to God? The bare apprehenſion of ſuch things that by their internal Nature have no attra-

ctive influence upon the Affections, is pleaſant to the Underſtanding. As the appearance of Light, though not attended with any other viſible Beauties, refreſhes the Eye after long darkneſs: So the clear diſcovery of Truths, how abſtract ſo ever, that were before unknown, is grateful to the intellective Faculty. Thus ſome have been ſtrangely tranſported with the pleaſure of a Mathematical Demonſtration, when the Evidence, not the Importance, of the thing was ſo raviſhing; for what is more dry and barren of delight than the ſpeculation of Figures and Numbers? *Solon* when near his End, and ſome of his Friends that viſited him were ſpeaking ſoftly of a Point of Philoſophy, by that ſound of Wiſdom was awaken'd from the ſleep of Death that was juſt ſeizing on him, and opening his Eyes, raiſing his Head to give attention; being ask'd the reaſon of it? Anſwered, *That when* * *I underſtand what you are diſcourſing of, I may die.* Such was his delight in Knowledg, that a little of it made his Agony inſenſible.

* Ut cum iſtud quiequid eſt de quo diſputatis percepero, moriar. *Val. Max.*

But here are many Imperfections that leſſen this intellectual Pleaſure, which

which ſhall ceaſe in Heaven. Here the acquiſition of Knowledg is often with the expence of Health: The Flower of the Spirits, neceſſary for natural Operations, is waſted by intenſe Thoughts. How often are the Learned ſickly? As the Flint when 'tis ſtruck, gives not a ſpark without conſuming it ſelf; So Knowledg is obtain'd by Studies that waſte our faint ſenſitive Faculties. But then our Knowledg ſhall be a free emanation from the ſpring of Truth, without our labour and pains. Here we learn by circuit, and diſcern by comparing things; ignorant darkneſs is diſpell'd by a gradual ſucceſſion of Light: But then perfect Knowledg ſhall be infuſed in a moment. Here, after all our labour and toyl, how little Knowledg do we gain? Every Queſtion is a Labyrinth, out of which the nimbleſt and moſt ſearching Minds cannot extricate themſelves. How many ſpecious Errors impoſe upon our Underſtandings? We look on things by falſe Lights, through deceiving Spectacles: But then our Knowledg ſhall be certain and compleat. There is no forbidden Tree in the Celeſtial Paradiſe, as no

inordinate Affection. But ſuppoſe that all things in the compaſs of the World were known, yet ſtill there would be emptineſs and anguiſh in the Mind: for the moſt comprehenſive knowledg of things that are inſufficient to make us happy, cannot afford true Satisfaction. But then we ſhall ſee God in all his Excellencies, the ſupream Object and End, the only Felicity of the Soul. How will the ſight of his glorious Perfections in the firſt moment quench our extream Thirſt, and fill us with Joy and Admiration? 'Tis not as the naked conception of Treaſures, that only makes rich in *Idea's*, but that Divine ſight gives a real intereſt in him. The Angels are ſo raviſh'd with the Beauties and Wonders of his Face, that they never divert a moment from the contemplation of it.

2. The pure Love of the Saints to God is fully ſatisfied in the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of him, and conſequently the greateſt delight and complacency is ſhed abroad in their Hearts. Love conſidered as an Affection of Friendſhip, is always attended with two Deſires; to be aſſured of Reciprocal Love, and to enjoy the Converſation of the Perſon

Perſon beloved, the teſtimony of his Eſteem and Good-will. This kind of * Affection ſeems to be inconſiſtent with that infinite diſtance that is between God and the Creature. But tho 'tis diſproportionable to the Divine Majeſty, 'tis proportionable to his Goodneſs. Accordingly our Saviour promiſes, *He that loves me, ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifeſt my ſelf unto him.* And to confirm our belief of this aſtoniſhing Condeſcention, repeats it, *If a Man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him.* In the preſent ſtate, the ſigns of God's ſpecial Favour are exhibited to his Friends. Now he beſtows on them the honour of being his Sons, the Graces and Comforts of his Spirit, the precious Earneſts of his Love, *and Seal of their Redemption.* But in eminency of degrees, the Emanations of his Love, and the Effects of his Beneficence, are incomparably more glorious in Heaven. Here the Saints are adopted, there crown'd. There he opens all the bright Treaſures of his Wiſdom, the Riches of his Goodneſs, the Beauties of his Holineſs, the Glo-

* *Ariſtotle.*

ries

ries of his Power, and by the intimate application of his Preſence makes his Love moſt ſenſible to them. Infinite Goodneſs excites and draws forth all the Powers of the Soul, and fills the utmoſt Capacity and Expanſion of the Spirit. From hence perpetual Pleaſure and Satisfaction ſprings. O the pure Delights between God and glorified Souls! God looks on them with an engaged Eye, as his own by many dear Titles, and is raviſh'd with the Reflex of his own Excellencies ſhining in them. *As the Bridegroom rejoices over the Bride,* ('tis the Language of Divine Love) *ſo their God rejoices over them. The Lord thy God in the midſt of thee is mighty, he will ſave, he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will reſt in his love; he will rejoice over thee with ſinging.* He is infinitely delighted in the communication of his Goodneſs to them. And what a bleſſed Reſt do they find in the compleat fruition of his Goodneſs? All their Deſires quietly expire in his Boſom. What triumphs of Joy follow? Can we frame a fuller Conception of Happineſs, than to be perfectly loved by the beſt and moſt bleſſed Being, and perfectly to love him, and

and to partake of the richeſt Emanations of his *Loving-kindneſs, that is far more valuable and deſireable than Life it ſelf?*

How precious and joyful will the Preſence of Chriſt be to the Saints? 'Twas his Prayer on Earth, *Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my Glory.* When the Saints are received into the Everlaſting Kingdom, the firſt Object that draws their admiring regards, is Chriſt on the Throne. Ineſtimable Felicity! whether we conſider him as the Son of God, in whoſe conſpicuous Countenance all the Glory of his Father ſhines, or as the Saviour of Men, and the Head of the Elect, upon a double account: partly, that *he that loved us, and waſh'd us from our Sins in his Blood*; after ſuffering all Indignities and Cruelties for our ſake, has received the Reward of his meritorious Sufferings, the triumph of his Victory, being *glorified with the Father with the Glory he had before the World was:* and partly becauſe every Member ſhall be conform'd to him in Glory. The ſight of the Face of *Moſes* when radiant, had no transforming Efficacy,

Efficacy, for the Light of it was not in him as its Spring but by derivation. But the Son of God is Light eſſentially, and the ſight of his Glory will transform us into his Likeneſs. And how dear and joyful is the preſence of the Saints to Chriſt? *He then ſees of the travel of his Soul, the fruit of his ſharp Sufferings and bleeding Love, and is ſatisfied.* How delightful is it to him to ſee all his Spiritual Progeny ſafely brought to Heaven, and made partakers of his Glory and Joy in his everlaſting Kingdom? For according to the extent of the Object, and dearneſs of the Affection, Joy riſes. He will then preſent them to his Father with infinite complacency; *Behold, here am I, and the Children whom thou haſt given me.*

The deareſt Affections of Chriſt and the Saints in Heaven, are mutual and reflexive. In the Sacred Song, the expreſſions of Love, Deſire, and Joy, borrowed from the eſpouſals of *Solomon* and his beloved Wife, are, as it were, Characters in the Bark, to be underſtood in a ſpiritual Senſe, of the Myſtical Marriage of Chriſt and the Church. What endearing entercourſe is

is there between the moſt perfect Lover and his Spouſe inſpir'd with the ſame pure Flam? Here amiable Perfections attract his Eye and Heart: *Thou art all fair, my Love, there is no ſpot in thee.* His propriety in the Church is his unvaluable Treaſure: *My Vineyard which is mine, is ever before me.* He repeats the word *Mine*, in the ſweeteſt and moſt tender manner. And the Church, with the ſame harmonious Affections, ſpeaks of Chriſt. She contemplates in a ſoft extaſy his ever-ſatisfying Beauty. *My Beloved is the chiefeſt of ten thouſand, he is altogether lovely.* She breaks forth in triumph, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.* By all their expreſſions of joyful Love and Union, we may aſcend in our Thoughts, what are the Joys of Heaven, where the Communion of Chriſt and the Church is entire and uninterrupted for ever? If Faith and Love of our unſeen Saviour produce *a Joy unſpeakable and glorious*, as if Believers were wrap'd up to Paradiſe, or Paradiſe deſcended into them, what will the ſight and fruition of him? There is as great a difference in degrees between the Joy that flows from the

Cant. 7.

Cant. 10. 15.

Cant. 6.

the aſſurance and application of Faith, and the Joy from Viſion and full Poſſeſſion, as between the impreſſion of Joy the Forerunner of Chriſt felt, when he ſprang in the Womb at the coming of our Saviour; and his raviſhing Joy, when he ſaw Chriſt, and pointed him out to his Diſciples, *Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the Sins of the World.*

3. The ſupream Joy of the Saints is for the Felicity and Glory of God himſelf. For as the holy Soul feels no more powerful motive to love God, than becauſe he is moſt worthy of it, as he is God, a Being of infinite Excellencies, and therefore to be loved above the deareſt Perſons and Things, even it ſelf; ſo the higheſt Joy it partakes of is from this conſideration, that God is infinitely bleſſed and glorious. For in this the ſupream deſire of Love is accompliſh'd, that the moſt beloved Object is perfectly honour'd and pleaſed. In Heaven the Love of the Saints to God is in its higheſt Perfection, and they ſee his Glory in the moſt perfect manner, which cauſes a tranſcendent Joy to them. And this is one reaſon why the Saints, tho ſhining with unequal degrees of Glory, are

are equally content. For their moſt ardent Love being ſet on God, that he is pleaſed to glorify himſelf by ſuch various communications of his Goodneſs, is full ſatisfaction to their Deſires. Beſides, in thoſe different degrees of Glory, every one is ſo content with his own, * that there is no poſſible deſire of being but what he is.

* Sic itaq; habebit donum aliud alio minus, ut hic quoq; donum habeat, ne velit amplius. *Aug.*

4. In Heaven *the innumerable Company of Angels, and the General Aſſembly of the Church of the Firſt-born*, as they receive Happineſs from the ſight of God, ſo they communicate the pureſt Pleaſure to one another. An unfeigned ardent Affection unites that pure Society. Our Love is now kindled, either from a relation in Nature, or a civil Account, or ſome viſible Excellencies that render a Perſon worthy of our Choice and Friendſhip: but in Heaven the Reaſons are greater, and the degrees of Love incomparably more fervent. All Carnal Alliances and Reſpects ceaſe in that ſupernatural State. The Apoſtle tells us, *If I have known Chriſt after the Fleſh, I know him ſo no more.* By the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of Chriſt he was tranſported into another World, and had communion with

with him as an Heavenly King, without low regards to the temporal Privileg of converſing with him on Earth. The ſpiritual Relation is more near and permanent than the ſtricteſt Band of Nature. The Saints have all relation to the ſame Heavenly Father, and to *Jeſus Chriſt* the Prince of Peace, and Head of that happy Fraternity. The principal Motives of Love here are the inherent Excellencies of a Perſon. Wiſdom, Holineſs, Goodneſs, Fidelity are mighty Attractives, and produce a more worthy Affection, a more intimate confederacy of Souls, than propinquity in Nature, or any carnal reſpects. Vertue is amiable in an old Perſon, tho wrinkled and deformed: Vice is hateful in a young Perſon, tho beautiful. There are clearer Eyes than thoſe of Fleſh, a purer Light than what is ſenſible, a diviner Beauty than what is Corporeal, and a nobler Love than what is ſenſual. *David* declares that *all his delight was in the Excellent.* But there are allays of this Spiritual Love here. For,

1. There are Reliques of Frailty in the beſt Men on Earth, ſome Blemiſhes that render them leſs amiable when diſcovered.

covered. Here their Graces are mix'd with Infirmities, and but aſcending to Glory. Accordingly our Love to them muſt be regular, and ſerene, not clouded with Error, miſtaking Defects for amiable Qualities. But in Heaven, the Image of God is compleat, by the union of all the glorious Vertues requiſite to its perfection. Every Saint there exactly agrees with the firſt Exemplar, a Divine Beauty ſhines in them ever durable, a Beauty that darts no contagious Fire, that is inviolable and can ſuffer no injury. The Apoſtle tells us, *The Church ſhall be glorious in Holineſs, without ſpot or wrinkle*, or any thing that may caſt an Aſpect of deformity upon it.

2. In the preſent ſtate the leaſt part of the Saints Worth is viſible. As the Earth is fruitful in Plants and Flowers, but its Riches are in Mines of precious Metals, and the Veins of Marble hidden in its Boſom. True Grace appears in ſenſible Actions, *but its Glory is Within.* * The ſincerity of Aims, the purity of Affections, the impreſſes of the Spirit on the Heart, the interior Beauties of Holineſs, are only ſeen by God. Beſides, ſuch is the humility of eminent

* O ſi animum boni viri liceret inſpicere, ex magnifico placidóq; fulgentem! nonne veluti numinis occurſu obſtupefacti eſſemus? *Senec.*

Saints, that the more they abound in ſpiritual Treaſures, the leſs they ſhow. As the heavenly Bodies when in neareſt conjunction with the *Sun*, and fulleſt of Light, make the leaſt appearance to our ſight. But all their Excellencies ſhall then be in view. *The Glory of God ſhall be revealed in them.* And how attractive is the Divine Likeneſs to an holy Eye? How will it raviſh the Saints to behold an immortal Lovelineſs ſhining in one another? Their Love is reciprocal, proportionable to the cauſe of it. An equal, conſtant Flame is preſerv'd by pure Materials. Every one is perfectly amiable, and perfectly enamour'd with all. How happy is that ſtate of Love? The Pſalmiſt breaks out in a Rapture, *Behold how good and pleaſant it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity!* Love is the Beauty and Strength of Societies, the Pleaſure of Life. How excellent is the Joy of the Bleſſed, when the Prayer of Chriſt ſhall be accompliſhed, that they all may be *one*; *as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us.* God is abſolutely One in his glorious Nature and Will, and therefore unalterably Happy; And their

their inviolable Union in Love, is a Ray of the Eſſential Unity between the Sacred Perſons. There are no Diviſions of Heart and Tongues, as in this *Babel*; but the moſt perfect and ſweeteſt Concord, an Eternal Agreement in Tempers and Inclinations. There are no envious Compariſons; for Love that affectively transforms one into another, cauſes the Glory of every Saint to redound to the Joy of all. Every one takes his ſhare in the Felicity of all, and adds to it. Such is the Power of that Celeſtial Fire wherein they all burn, that it melts and mixes Souls in ſuch an entire Union, that by Complacence, and an intimate Joy, the Bleſſedneſs of all is, as it were, proper to every one; as if every one were plac'd in the Hearts of all, and all in the Heart of every one. If in the Church of the Firſt-born Chriſtians in the earthly *Jeruſalem*, the Band of Charity was ſo ſtrict, that 'tis ſaid, the *Multitude of Believers were of one Heart, and one Soul*; How much more intimate and inſeparable is the Union of the Saints in *Jeruſalem* above, where every one loves another as himſelf? 'Tis recorded of *Alexander*, that entring with *Hepheſtion* his Favorite, into the Pavi-

lion of the Mother of *Darius*, then his Priſoner, ſhe bowed to the Favorite, as having a greater appearance of Majeſty, thinking him to be *Alexander:* But adviſed of her Error, ſhe humbly begg'd his Pardon. To whom the generous King replied, *You did not err, Mother, this is alſo* Alexander. Such was their Affection, that whoever was taken of them, the other was taken in him; the leſs aſcending in the greater, without degrading the greater in the leſs. This is a Copy of the holy Love of the Bleſſed; but with the ſame difference, as between the Deſcription of a Star with a Coal, and its Beauty in its proper Aſpect. And where all is Love, all is Delight. The Act it ſelf is its own Reward. As that benign and pleaſant Affection is enlarged with reſpect to the Object, and its degrees, ſuch is the complacence and delight that reſults from it. In that bleſſed Society there is a conſtant receiving and returning of Love and Joy. And that double exerciſe of the Saints, in the perfect circle of Love, is like the pleaſant labour of the Bees, who all the day are flying to the Gardens, and returning to their Hives, and all their Art is in ex-

Non errâſti Mater, nam hic *Alexander* eſt. *Curt. lib.* 3.

extracting the pureſt Spirits from fragrant Flowers, and making ſweet Honey. O how do they rejoice and triumph in the Happineſs of one another? With what an unimaginable tenderneſs do they embrace? What Reciprocations of Endearments are between them? O their raviſhing Converſation, and ſweet Entercourſe! for their Preſence together in Heaven is not a ſilent Show. In the Transfiguration, *Moſes* and *Elias* talk'd with Chriſt: We may underſtand a little of it, by the ſenſible complacence that is among ſincere Friends here. In pure Amity there is a threefold Union: a Union of Reſemblance, that is the principle of it; likeneſs cauſes Love: a Union of Affection, that is its Eſſence; 'tis ſaid of *Jonathan*, that incomparable Friend, *his Soul was knit with the Soul of* David, *and he loved him as his own Soul*: the Union of Converſation, that is requiſite to the ſatisfaction of Love. What an entertainment of Love and Joy is there in the preſence and diſcourſes of dear Friends! their mutual Aſpects, like a Chain compos'd of Spirits luminous and active, draw and faſten their Souls to one another: The Felicity of

Love conſiſts in their Converſation. Now in Heaven whatever is pleaſant in Friendſhip is in Perfection; and whatever is diſtaſtful by Mens Folly and Weakneſs is aboliſh'd. With what excellent Diſcourſes do they entertain one another? If *David* felt ſuch inward Pleaſure from the ſenſe of God's Favours, that he could not reſtrain the expreſſion of it, but invites the Saints, *Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he has done for my Soul.* Certainly in Heaven, the Bleſſed with overflowing Affections recount the Divine Benefits: the admirable Methods, whereby the Life of Grace was begun, preſerv'd and carried on in the midſt of Temptations; the continual Succeſſion of Mercies in the time of their Hopes, and the Conſummation of all in the time of their enjoyment. How joyfully do they concur in their Thankſgivings to God for the Goodneſs of Creation: in making them reaſonable Creatures, capable to know, love and enjoy him, when they might have been of the loweſt Order in the whole Sphere of Beings; for his compaſſionate Care and Providence over them in this World, but eſpecially for his ſovereign

and

and ſingular Mercy in electing them to be Veſſels of Honour; for his powerful Grace, in reſcuing them from the cruel and ignominious Bondage of Sin: for his moſt free Love, that juſtified them from all their Guilt by the Death of his only Son, and glorified them with himſelf. They are never weary in this delightful Exerciſe, but continually bleſs him for his *Mercy that endures for ever.* We may judg by the Saints here, when they are in a fit diſpoſition to praiſe God, what Fervors they feel in their united Praiſes of him in Heaven. The *Pſalmiſt* in an Extaſy calls to all the parts of the World to join with him; *The Lord reigns, let the Heavens rejoice, and the Earth be glad; let the Sea roar, let the Fields be joyful, and all that dwell therein.* He deſires that Nature ſhould be elevated above it ſelf, that the dead parts be inſpired with Life, the inſenſible feel motions of Joy, and thoſe that want a Voice break forth in Praiſes, to adorn the Divine Triumph. With what Life and Alacrity will the Saints in their bleſſed Communion celebrate the Object of their Love and Praiſes? The *Seraphims* about the Throne *cried to one another,* to expreſs their Zeal and Joy,

in celebrating his Eternal Purity and Power, and the Glory of his Goodneſs. O the unſpeakable Pleaſure of this Concert! when every Soul is harmonious, and contributes his part to the full Muſick of Heaven. O could we hear but ſome *Eccho* of thoſe Songs wherewith the Heaven of Heavens reſounds, ſome remains of thoſe Voices wherewith the Saints above *triumph in the Praiſes*, in the ſolemn Adoration of the King of Spirits, how would it inflame our Deſires to be join'd with them? *Bleſſed are thoſe that are in thy Houſe, they always praiſe thee.*

3. The fulneſs of Joy in Heaven is everlaſting, without defect, and without end.

1. 'Tis undecaying, the productive Cauſes are conſervative of it, being always equal. Thoſe are the beatifick Object, and the continual fruition of it. Whilſt we are here below, the Sun of Righteouſneſs, as to our perception and ſenſe, has Aſcenſions and Declinations, Acceſſes and Receſſes. And our Earth is not ſo purified, but ſome Vapours ariſe that intercept his chearful refreſhing Light. From hence there are alternate ſucceſſions

of

of Spiritual Comforts and Sorrows, of Doubts and filial Confidence in the Saints. 'Tis a rare Favour of Heaven, when an humble Believer in his whole courſe is ſo circumſpect, as not to provoke God to appear diſpleaſed againſt him: When a Chriſtian (as thoſe tutelar Angels ſpoken of in the Goſpel) always beholds the Face of his Heavenly Father, and converſes with him with an holy Liberty. And what a torment the *hiding of God's Face* is to a deſerted Soul, only they know who feel it. External troubles are many times attended with more Conſolations to the Spirit, than Afflictions to Senſe; but to love God with a tranſcendent Affection, and to fear he is our Enemy, no Puniſhment exceeds, or is equal to it. As his Loving-kindneſs in their eſteem is better than Life, ſo his Diſpleaſure is worſe than Death. How do they wreſtle with God by Prayers and Tears, and offer, as it were, a holy Violence to the King of Heaven, to recover their firſt ſerenity of Mind, the loſt Peace of Heart? How paſſionately do they cry out with *Job*, in the Book of his Patience, *O that I were as in months paſt, as in the days when God preſerved me: when his* Job. 29. 2, 3, 4.

his Candle ſhin'd upon my head, and when by his Light I walk'd through darkneſs: As I was in the days of my youth, when the Secret of God was upon my Tabernacle. And ſometimes God delays the revealing himſelf even to his deareſt Children; not that he does not ſee their Neceſſities, and hears their Prayers, or is ſo hard that till their Extremities he is not moved with Compaſſion, but for wiſe and holy Reaſons; Either *that they may not return to folly*, if by any preſumptuous Sin they forfeited their Peace; or if they have been careful to pleaſe him, yet he may deprive them of Spiritual Comforts for a time, to keep them humble, and that with an obedient reſignation to his Sovereign Pleaſure they may wait for his reviving Preſence. And then Joy returns greater than before. For thus God uſually renders with intereſt what he ſuſpended only for trial. But the Saints above are for ever enlightned with the vital ſplendor, and dear regards of his Countenance, always enjoy his beamy ſmiles. A continual effuſion of Glory illuſtrates Heaven and all its bleſſed Inhabitants.

And their Contemplation of God is fixed. If the Object, though extraordinary

dinary glorious, were tranſient, or the Eye ſo weak that it could only ſee it but by glances, the height of Joy would not be perpetual. But the mind is prepar'd with ſupernatural vigour, to ſee the brightneſs of God's Face, and by the moſt attentive application always converſes with that bleſſed Object; ſo that the Joy of Heaven is never intermitted for a moment. They always ſee, and love, and rejoice, and praiſe him.

'Tis poſſible a carnal ſuſpicion may ariſe in ſome, as if the uniform perpetual viſion of the ſame Glory might loſe its perfect delightfulneſs. For thoſe who ſeek for happineſs in the vanity of the Creatures, are always deſirous of change, and have their Judgments ſo corrupted, that while they languiſh with a ſecret deſire after an unchangeable Good, yet they conceive no Good as deſireable, that is not changed.

But to correct this groſs errour of Fancy, let us a little enquire into the cauſes of Diſſatisfaction, that make the conſtant fruition of the ſame thing here to be tedious.

Senſible things are of ſuch a limited Goodneſs, that not any of them can ſupply

ſupply all our preſent wants, ſo that 'tis neceſſary to leave one for another. And the moſt of them are Remedies of our diſeaſed Appetites, and if not temperately uſed, are deſtructive Evils. Eating and Drinking are to extinguiſh Hunger and Thirſt, but continued beyond juſt meaſure, become nauſeous. Beſides, the Inſufficiency of their Objects, the Senſes themſelves cannot be ſatisfied all at once. The Ear cannot attend to delightful Sounds, and the Eye be intent on beautiful Colours at the ſame time. The Satisfaction of one Senſe defeats another of enjoying its proper good; therefore the ſame Object is not conſtantly pleaſant, but the Heart is diſtemper'd from as many Cauſes, as there are deſires unaccompliſh'd. Add farther, all things under the Sun afford only a ſuperficial delight, and miſerably deceive the Expectations raiſed of them: and many times there is a mixture of ſome evil in them, that is more offenſive, than the good is delightful. The Honey is attended with a Sting, ſo that often thoſe very things we ſigh after through vehement deſire, when they are obtain'd, we ſigh for grief. Now all theſe Cauſes of diſſatisfaction

faction ceaſe in Heaven; * for there is an infinite variety in God, and whatever is truly deſirable is eminently enjoyed in him. And in his Preſence all the Powers of the Soul are drawn out in their moſt pleaſant exerciſe, and always enjoy their entire happineſs. The fruition of him exceeds our moſt raiſed hopes, as much as he is more glorious in Himſelf than in any borrowed Repreſentations. God will be to us incomparably *above what we can ask or think.* The compaſs of our thoughts, the depth of our deſires are imperfect meaſures of his Perfections. And as he is a *Pure Good* in Himſelf, ſo he is prevalent over all Evil. 'Tis evident therefore that nothing can allay the Joys of Saints when they are in God's preſence.

* Vitæ nos tædium tenet timor mortis, natat omne conſilium, nec implere nos ulla fælicitas poteſt. Cauſa autē eſt, quod non pervenimus ad illud bonum immenſum & inſuperabile, ubi neceſſe eſt, conſiſtat nobis voluntas noſtra, quia ultra ſummum non eſt locus. *Senec.* Ep. 74.

2. Novelty is not requiſite to ingratiate every Good, and make it perfectly delightful. † God is infinitely happy, to whom no Good was ever new. 'Tis indeed the Sauce that gives a delicious taſte to inferior things. For Men reliſh only what is eminent; and the good things of this World are ſo truly mean, that they are feign to borrow a ſhew of Greatneſs by compariſon with a worſe eſtate

† Εἰ ἡ φύσις ἁπλὴ εἴη, ἡ αὐτὴ πρᾶξις ἡδίστη ἔσται. Διὸ ὁ Θεὸς ἀεὶ μίαν χὴ ἁπλῆν χαίρει ἡδονήν. Ariſt. Eth. l. 7. c. ult.

eſtate preceding. But an infinite Good produces always the ſame pure equal compleat Joy, becauſe it ariſes from its intrinſick perfection, that wants no Foil to commend it. The *Pſalmiſt* breaks forth, *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee?* This is no vaniſhing Rapture, but a conſtant joyful height of Affection. God, the eſſential Happineſs of the Saints, is always perfectly lovely and delightful to them.

3. The glorified Saints in every Period of their happy ſtate, have as lively a perception of it as in the beginning. To make this evident, we muſt conſider that the pleaſure of Novelty ſprings from a quick ſenſe of the oppoſite terms, between our condition in the want of ſome deſired Good, and after our obtaining it. Now the Mind is more intenſe on the advantage, and more ſtrongly affected at firſt. One newly freed from the torments of a ſharp diſeaſe, feels a greater pleaſure than from a conſtant tenour of health. Thoſe who are rais'd from a low ſtate to eminent Dignity, are tranſported with their firſt change, but in tract of time the remembrance of their mean condition is ſo weakned and ſpent, that 'tis like

like the ſhadow of a Dream, and proportionably their Joy is leſſened. Honours like Perfumes, by cuſtom are leſs ſenſible to thoſe that carry them. But the Saints above always conſider and feel the excellent difference between their ſuffering and triumphant ſtate. They never loſe that raviſhing part of felicity, the vivid ſenſe of paſt evils. Their reflections are always as ſtrong on the Miſery from whence they were rais'd to the pitch of Happineſs, as in their firſt glorious Tranſlation. In what an Extaſy of wonder and pleaſure will they be, from the freſh memory of what they were, and the joyful ſenſe of what they are? *I was* (ſays the admiring Soul) *poor, blind, and naked*; but O miraculous and happy Alteration! I am full of Light, enrich'd with the Treaſures of Heaven, adorn'd with Divine Glory. I was under the tyrannous power of Satan, *but he is bruiſed under my feet.* I was ſentenc'd to an everlaſting ſeparation from the Preſence of God, my only Life and Joy; but now am poſſeſt of my ſupream Good. O how tranſporting is the compariſon of theſe wide and contrary extreams? How beautiful and pleaſant is the Day

of

of Eternity, after ſuch a dark tempeſtuous Night? How does the remembrance of ſuch Evils produce a more lively and feeling fruition of ſuch Happineſs? How ſtrangely and mightily does *Salvation with Eternal Glory affect the Soul?*. This gives a ſpritely accent to their everlaſting *Hallelujahs.* This preſerves an affectionate Heat in their Thankſgivings to their Victorious Deliverer. And thus their Happineſs is always the ſame, and always new. Their Pleaſure is continued in its Perfection.

The number of Poſſeſſors cannot leſſen their Felicity. The Divine Preſence is an unwaſted Spring of Pleaſure, equally full and open to all, and abundantly ſufficient to ſatisfy the immenſity of their Deſires. Envy reigns in this World, becauſe earthly things are ſo imperfect in their Nature, and ſo peculiar in their Poſſeſſion, that they cannot ſuffice, not be enjoyed by all. But in Heaven none is touch'd with that baſe low Paſſion: for God contains all that is precious and deſirable in the higheſt degrees of Perfection, and all partake of his Univerſal Goodneſs without intercepting one another.

In

In the Kingdom of Heaven there is no cauſe for the Elder Brother to repine at the Father's Bounty to the Younger, nor for the Younger to ſupplant the Elder to obtain the Birth-right. *The Heirs of God* are all rais'd to Sovereign Glory, and every one enjoys him as entirely and fully as if ſolely his Felicity. God is a *Good* as *indiviſible* as *infinite*, and not diminiſhed by the moſt liberal communications of Himſelf. We may illuſtrate this by comparing the Price of our Redemption, and the Reward. The Death of Chriſt is a univerſal Benefit to all the Saints, yet 'tis ſo applied to every Believer for his perfect Redemption, as if our Saviour in all his Agonies and Sufferings had no other in his Eye and Heart, as if all his Prayers, his Tears, his Blood were offer'd up to his Father only for that Perſon. The common reſpect of it the Apoſtle declares in thoſe admirable words, that ſignify ſuch an exceſs of God's Love to us, *He that ſpared not his own Son, but deliver'd him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* But to imagin that the * propriety of every Believer is thereby prejudiced, is not only falſe, but

* Et totum ſe dedit univerſis, & totum ſingulis. Ac per hoc quicquid paſſione ſua Salvator præſtitit, ſicut totum ei debent univerſi, ſic ſinguli; niſi quod propè hoc plus ſinguli quàm univerſi, quod totum accepe runt ſingu li, quantum univerſi. *Salvian.*

but extreamly injurious to the Merit and Dignity, and to the infinite Love of Chriſt. Therefore the ſame Apoſtle tells us, *The Life which I now live in the Fleſh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God; who loved me, and gave himſelf for me:* as if he were the ſole Object of Chriſt's Love, the End and Reward of his Sufferings. And this appropriating of it to himſelf, is no prejudice to the Rights of all others. St. *John* deſcribes himſelf by that truly glorious Title, *The Diſciple whom Jeſus loved.* Could he ſpeak this of himſelf without the injury and indignation of the other Diſciples? Certainly he might. For if we conſider that incomprehenſible Love of Chriſt, expreſt to them all at his laſt Supper, after *Judas* was gone forth; *As the Father hath loved me, ſo I have loved you*; we may eaſily underſtand, that every one of them might juſtly believe that he was ſingularly beloved of Chriſt. They were all received in the Heart, though (with *John*) they did not all lean on the Breaſt of their Divine Maſter. Thus in Heaven God is the univerſal Treaſure of all the Saints, and the peculiar Portion of every one, not engroſs'd by poſſeſſing, nor waſted by

by enjoying. * As by his Eſſence he equally fills the whole World, and every part of it; and by his Providence equally regards all and every particular Creature; ſo in Heaven he diſpenſes the Riches of his Love to all, that they cannot deſire more, if every one of them were the ſole Heir of all the Merits of his Son, and enjoyed him alone for ever.

* Si audiat multitudo ſilens, non interſe particulatim communuunt ſonos, tanquam cibos: ſed omne quod ſonat & omnibus totum eſt, & ſingulis totum. *Auguſt.* in Ep. ad *Voluſan.*

2. The Bleſſedneſs of the Saints, as 'tis without diminution, ſo 'tis without end: 'tis compleat and continual for ever. This makes Heaven to be Heaven; the Security is as valuable as the Felicity. There is no ſatiety of the preſent, no ſolicitude for the future. Were there a poſſibility, or the leaſt ſuſpicion of loſing that happy State, it would caſt an aſperſion of bitterneſs upon all their Delights; it would diſturb their peaceful Fruition, and joyful Tranquillity: as Hope in Miſery allays Sorrow, ſo Fear in Happineſs daſhes Joy: and the more excellent the Happineſs is, the more ſtinging would be the fear of loſing it. *But the Inheritance reſerved in Heaven, is immortal, undefiled, and fades not away.* And the Tenure of their Poſſeſſion is

infinitely firm, by the Promiſe of God, who is truly immutable, and immutably true, and by the Divine Power, the ſupport of their everlaſting Duration. Our Saviour aſſures his Diſciples, *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo: and he lives for evermore.* This bleſſed Priviledg the Saints have by Jeſus Chriſt, (who obtain'd eternal Redemption for them) above the Grace given to Angels and Men in the firſt Creation. The Angels were upon trial of their Obedience, not in a determin'd State of Felicity. The firſt declination of Love and Subjection, was fatal to them. Woful Change! how unlike to themſelves in their Original Purity and Glory! an unparallel'd Example of the Frailty of the Creature, and the Divine Severity. Man did ſtand in Paradiſe for a little while, and had a ruinous Fall with all his Progeny. *But the glorified Saints ſit with Chriſt in Heavenly Places,* and enjoy an unchangeable Happineſs, as permanent as the everlaſting Author of it, and the everlaſting Soul the Subject of it. *With God is the Fountain of Life.* Who can pluck them out of the Hands and Boſom of a Gracious God? He will never

ver withdraw his Love, and they ſhall never forfeit it: for Sin is from the perverſneſs of the Will and the diſorder of the Affections, join'd with ſome Error of the Mind. But in the Light of Glory, and full enjoyment of God, the Underſtanding is ſo perfectly illuminated, the Will and Affections ſo exceedingly ſatisfi'd, that 'tis impoſſible they ſhould apprehend erroneouſly, or deſire irregularly. God is Love, and will kindle in the Saints a pure Affection that Eternity ſhall not leſſen. In the preſent ſtate, our Love is imperfect; and as Fire out of its Sphere dies away by our neglect to feed it by proper Materials, enamouring Conſiderations of God. But in Heaven the uncreated Sun attracts every Eye with the Light of his Beauty, and inflames every Heart with the heat of his Love. The glorious Preſence of God is in different reſpects the Cauſe and Effect of our Love to him, for the ſight of God is the moſt powerful Attractive to love him, and Love fixes the Mind upon him. And the perſevering Love of God aſſures the conſtant fruition of him: for by Love the ſupreme Good is poſſeſs'd and enjoyed. The Apoſtle

tells us, *Charity never fails*, and therefore the Happineſs of Heaven never fails. They enjoy a better Immortality, than the Tree of Life could have preſerved in *Adam*. The Revolutions of the Heavens, and Ages, are under their Feet, and cannot in the leaſt alter or determine their Happineſs. After the paſſing of Millions of Years, ſtill an entire Eternity remains of their enjoying God. O moſt deſireable State! where Bleſſedneſs and Eternity are inſeparably united. O joyful Harmony! when the full *Chorus* of Heaven ſhall ſing, *This God is our God for ever and ever*. This adds an infinite weight to their Glory. This redoubles their Joys with infinite ſweetneſs and ſecurity: for the direct pleaſure of enjoying God, is attended with the pleaſant reflection it ſhall continue for ever. They repoſe themſelves in the compleat fruition of their Happineſs. God reigns in the Saints, and they live in him for ever. Eternity crowns and conſummates their Felicity.

The Application.

From what has been diſcourſed we ſhould,

1. Conſider the woful Folly of Men in refuſing ſuch an Happineſs, that by the admirable Favour of God is offer'd to their choice. Can there be an Expectation, or Deſire, or Capacity in Man of enjoying an Happineſs beyond what is Infinite and Eternal? O blind and wretched World! ſo careleſs of everlaſting Felicity. Who can behold, without compaſſion and indignation, Men vainly ſeeking for Happineſs where 'tis not to be found, and after innumerable diſappointments flying at an Impoſſibility, and neglect their Sovereign and final Bleſſedneſs? An Error in the firſt enquiry might have ſome colour of an Excuſe, but having been ſo often deceived with painted Grapes for the Fruits of Paradiſe, that Men ſhould ſtill ſeek for ſubſtantial Bleſſedneſs to fill the Soul, in vain ſhows that can only feed the Eye, is beyond all degrees of Folly. Aſtoniſhing madneſs! that God and Heaven ſhould be deſpiſed in compariſon of painted Tri-

fles. This adds the greateſt contumely to their Impiety. What powerful Charm obſtructs their true judging of things? What Spirit of Errour poſſeſſes them? Alas, *Eternal things are unſeen!* not of conſpicuous moment, and therefore in the carnal Ballance are eſteemed light, againſt temporal things preſent to the Senſe. *It does not appear what we ſhall be:* The Vail of the viſible Heavens covers the Sanctuary, where JESUS our High-Prieſt is entred, and ſtops the enquiring Eye.

But have we not aſſurance by the moſt infallible Principles of Faith, that the Son of God came down from Heaven to live with us, and die for us, and that he roſe again to confirm our Belief in his *exceeding great and precious Promiſes* concerning this Happineſs in the Future State? And do not the moſt evident Principles of Reaſon and univerſal Experience prove, that this World cannot afford true Happineſs to us? How wretchedly do we forfeit the Prerogative of the reaſonable Nature, by neglecting our laſt and bleſſed End? If the Mind be darkned, that it does not ſee the amiable Excellencies of God, and the Will be depraved that it does not

not feel their raviſhing Power; the Man ceaſes to be a Man, and becomes like the Beaſts that periſh. As a blind Eye is no longer an Eye, being abſolutely uſeleſs to that end for which it was made. And though in this preſent ſtate Men are ſtupid and unconcern'd, yet hereafter their Miſery will awaken them, to diſcover what is that Supream Good wherein their Perfection and Felicity conſiſts. When their Folly ſhall be expoſed before God, Angels, and Saints, in what extream confuſion will they appear before that glorious and immenſe Theatre? Our Saviour told the unbelieving *Jews*, *There ſhall be weeping, and gnaſhing of Teeth, when ye ſhall ſee* Abraham, *and* Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you your ſelves turn'd out.* They ſhall be tortur'd with the deſire of Happineſs without poſſible Satisfaction. 'Tis moſt juſt that thoſe who err without excuſe, ſhould repent without remedy.

2. Let us be ſeriouſly excited to apply our ſelves with inflamed deſires and our utmoſt diligence to obtain this unchangeable Happineſs? In order to this we ſhall conſider the cauſes of it, and

and the means whereby 'tis obtain'd.

The Original moving Cauſe is the pure rich Mercy of God that prepared it for his People, and prepares them for it. The procuring Cauſe is the meritorious efficacy of Chriſt's Obedience and Sufferings. This is expreſly declared by the Apoſtle; *The wages of Sin is Death, but the gift of God is eternal Life through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

I. The deſigning, the preparation, and actual beſtowing of the Heavenly Glory is from the Mercy of God. This will appear by conſidering,

1. That it is abſolutely impoſſible that a meer Creature, though perfect, ſhould deſerve any thing from God. For enjoying its being and powers of working from his Goodneſs, the product of all is entirely due to him. And the payment of a Debt acquires no Title to a Reward. He is the Proprietary and Lord of all by Creation. Hence 'tis clear that in the order of diſtributive Juſtice nothing can be challenged from him.

2. Beſides, ſuch is the infinite Perfection of God in Himſelf, that no benefit can redound to him by the Service of the Creature. *When you have done all,*

ſay

ſay you are unprofitable Servants, for we have done but what we ought to do. The neglect of our duty juſtly expoſes to puniſhment, but the performance of it deſerves no Reward, becauſe no advantage accrues to God by it. *Who hath firſt given unto him, and it ſhall be recompenſed to him again?* He challenges all Creatures even of the higheſt order. To ſpeak ſtrictly therefore, When God crowns the Angels with Glory, he gives what is meerly his own, and does not render what is theirs. If he ſhould leave them in their pure Nature, or deprive them of their Being, he were no loſer, nor injurious to them. For what Law binds him to enrich them with Immortal Glory, who are no ways profitable to him, or to preſerve that being they had from his unexcited Goodneſs. No Creature can give to him, therefore none can receive from him by way of valuable Conſideration.

3. There is no proportion between the beſt Works of Men, and the excellency of the Reward, much leſs an equivalence. 'Twas the juſt and humble acknowledgment of *Jacob* to God, *I am leſs than the leaſt of all thy Mercies*, thoſe that common Providence diſpenſes for the

the ſupport and refreſhment of this temporal Life. But how much leſs than the glorious Excellencies of the ſupernatural Divine Life, wherein the Saints reign with God for ever? The moſt coſtly, the moſt difficult and hazardous Services, are equally nothing in point of Merit, with the giving but a *Cup of cold Water to a Diſciple of Chriſt*, there being no correſpondence in value between them and the Kingdom of Heaven. The Apoſtle tells us, *I count the Sufferings of the preſent Life are not to be compar'd to the Glory that ſhall be revealed in us.* And ſuffering is more than doing. God rewards his faithful Servants not according to the dignity of their Works, but his own Liberality and Magnificence. As *Alexander* having ordered fifty Talents of Gold to be given to a Gentleman in Poverty to ſupply his want, and he ſurpris'd with that immenſe Bounty, modeſtly ſaid, ten were enough; He replied, *If fifty are too much for you to receive, ten are too little for me to give; therefore do you receive as Poor, I will give as a King.* Thus God in the diſpenſing his Favours does not reſpect the meanneſs of our Perſons or Services, but gives to us as a God. And the

the cleareſt Notion of the Deity is that he is a Being infinite in all Perfections, therefore all-ſufficient and moſt willing to make his Creatures compleatly happy.

4. If a Creature perfectly Holy that never ſinn'd is uncapable to merit any thing from God, much leſs can thoſe who are born in a ſinful State, and guilty of innumerable actual Tranſgreſſions, pretend to deſerve any Reward for their Works. This were preſumption inſpir'd by prodigious Vanity. For,

1. By his moſt free Grace they are reſtored in converſion to that Spiritual Power by which they ſerve him. The *Chaos* was not a deader Lump before the Spirit of God moved on the Face of the Waters, than the beſt of Men were before the vital influences of the Spirit wrought upon them. And for this they are ſo deeply obliged to God, that if a thouſand times more for his Glory were perform'd, yet they cannot diſcharge what they owe.

2. The continuance and increaſe of the powerful ſupplies of Grace to the Saints, who even ſince their holy calling by many laſpes have juſtly deſerved that God ſhould withdraw his grieved Spirit,

rit, are new Obligations to Thankfulneſs: and the more Grace, the leſs Merit.

3. The beſt Works of Men are imperfect, allayed with the mixtures of Infirmities, and not of full weight in the Divine Ballance. If God ſhould ſtrictly examin our Righteouſneſs, 'twill be found neither pure nor perfect in his Eyes, and without Favour and Indulgence would be rejected. And that which wants Pardon, cannot deſerve Praiſe and Glory. *He ſhews Mercy to thouſands that love him, and keep his Commandments.* If Obedience were meritorious, it were ſtrict juſtice to reward them. The Apoſtle prays for *Oneſiphorus*, who had expoſed himſelf to great danger for his love to the Goſpel, *The Lord grant he may find Mercy in that day.* The Divine Mercy gives the Crown of Life to the Faithful in the day of eternal Recompences.

II. The meritorious Cauſe of our obtaining Heaven, is the Obedience of Jeſus Chriſt comprehending all that he did and ſuffered to reconcile God to us. From him as the eternal Word we have all benefits in the order of Nature, *for all things were made by him*, and for him, as

as the incarnate Word, all good things in the order of Grace. What we enjoy in Time, and expect in Eternity, is by him. To ſhew what influence his Mediation has to make us happy, we muſt conſider;

1. Man by his Rebellion juſtly forfeited his Happineſs, and the Law exacts preciſely the Forfeiture. Pure Juſtice requires the Crime ſhould be puniſh'd according to its Quality, much leſs will it ſuffer the guilty to enjoy the favour of God. For Sin is not to be conſidered as an Offence and Injury to a private Perſon, but the violation of a Law, and a diſturbance in the order of Government, ſo that to preſerve the honour of governing Juſtice, an equivalent reparation was appointed. Till Sin was expiated by a proper Sacrifice, the Divine Goodneſs was a ſealed Spring, and its bleſſed effects reſtrain'd from the guilty Creature. Now the Son of God in our aſſumed Nature offered up himſelf a Sacrifice in our ſtead, to ſatisfy Divine Juſtice, and removed the Bar, that Mercy might be glorified in our Salvation. The Apoſtle gives this account of it; *We have boldneſs to enter into the Holieſt, by the Blood of Chriſt,* Heb. 10. 19, 20.

Chriſt, by a new and living way which he hath conſecrated for us through the Vail, that is to ſay, his Fleſh.

2. Such were the moſt precious Merits of his Obedience, that it was not only ſufficient to free the guilty contaminated Race of Mankind from Hell, but to purchaſe for them the Kingdom of Heaven. If we conſider his Humane Nature, all Graces were born with him, as Rays with the Sun, and ſhin'd in the whole courſe of his Life in the excellence of Perfection. And the dignity of his Divine Perſon derived an immenſe Value to all he perform'd as Mediator. One Act of his Obedience was more honourable to God than all the Lives of the Saints, the Deaths of the Martyrs, and the Service of the Angels. God was more pleaſed in the Obedience of his Beloved Son, than he was provok'd by the rebellion of his Servants. Therefore, as the juſt Recompence of it, he conſtituted him to be Univerſal Head of the Church, ſupream Judg of the World; inveſted him with Divine Glory, and with Power to communicate it to his faithful Servants. *He is the Prince of Life.* In ſhort, it is as much upon the account of Chriſt's Sufferings that we are

are glorified, as that we are forgiven. The Wounds he received in his Body, the Characters of Ignominy, and Footſteps of Death, are the Fountains of our Glory. His Abaſement is the cauſe of our Exaltation.

If it be ſaid, This ſeems to leſſen the freeneſs of this Gift. The anſwer is clear;

This was due to Chriſt, but undeſerved by us. Beſides, the appointing his Son to be our Mediator in the way of our Ranſom, was the moſt glorious Work of his Goodneſs.

2. The Means of our obtaining Heaven are to be conſidered. Though the Divine Goodneſs be free in its Acts, and there can be nothing in the Creature of Merit, or Inducement to prevail upon God in the nature of a Cauſe, yet he requires Qualifications in all thoſe who ſhall enjoy that bleſſed unchangeable Kingdom. The Apoſtle expreſly declares, *'Tis not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that ſheweth Mercy.* But we muſt diſtinguiſh the Effects of this Mercy, which are diſpenſed in that order the Goſpel lays down. The firſt Mercy is the powerful calling the Sinner from his corrupt and wretch- Rom. 9. 16.

ed State; a ſecond Mercy is the pardoning his Sins; the laſt and moſt eminent is the glorifying him in Heaven. Now 'tis clear that in this place, *the ſhewing of Mercy*, ſignifies the preventing Grace of God in Converſion; for in the 18th Verſe, 'tis ſaid, God ſhews Mercy to *whom he will, and whom he will he hardens*. Where 'tis evident *that ſhewing Mercy* is oppos'd not to condemning, but *to hardning*; and conſequently the intent of the words is this, That Divine Grace overcomes the Rebellious Will, ſoftens the ſtiff and ſtubborn Heart, and makes it pliant to Obedience. This flows from his pure good Will and Pleaſure, without the leaſt Motive from the Inclinations or Endeavours of ſinful Men. But the other Effects of God's Mercy require Conditions in the Subjects that receive them: for he pardons only penitent Believers, and glorifies none but perſevering Saints.

To make this clear, 'tis worthy of Obſervation, The Goſpel has ſeveral Denominations. 'Tis called *a Law, a Covenant, and a Teſtament.* 'Tis called *the Law of Faith, and the Law of the Spiritual Life.* As a Law, it ſignifies a new

Rom. 3. 27.

Right

Right that God has moſt freely eſtabliſh'd in favour of loſt Man, that commands certain Duties, and ſets before them Eternal Life as the Reward of Obedience, and Eternal Death the Puniſhment of Diſobedience. According to this the trial and deciſion of Mens everlaſting States ſhall be, which is the Character of a true Law. This Law of Grace is very different from the Law of Nature, that requir'd intire Innocence, and for the leaſt omiſſion, or accuſing Act, paſt an irrevocable Doom upon the Offenders; for that ſtrictneſs and ſeverity is mollified by the Goſpel, which accepts of ſincere perſevering Obedience tho imperfect; accordingly 'tis called *the Law of Liberty*. But *the Law of Faith* is unalterable, and admits of no Diſpenſation from the Duties required in order to our being everlaſtingly happy. James 2.

2. The Goſpel is ſtiled *a Covenant*, and that imports a reciprocal Engagement between Parties for the performance of the Matter contained in it. The Covenant of Grace includes the Promiſe of pardoning and rewarding Mercy on God's part, and the Conditions on Man's, with reſpect to which 'tis

to be perform'd. There is an inviolable dependence between them. He will
Heb. 9. be *our God*, to make us happy, *but we muſt be his People to yield unreſerved Obe-*
2 Cor. *dience to him. He will be our Father, and we ſhall be his Sons and Daughters*; but 'tis upon the terms of *purifying our ſelves from all pollutions of Fleſh and Spirit*, and unfeigned endeavours to *perfect Holineſs in his fear*. 'Tis aſtoniſhing Goodneſs that he is pleaſed to condeſcend to ſuch a Treaty with fallen Creatures: by a voluntary Promiſe he encourages them, but tho moſt free in making, 'tis conditional in the performance. The conſtancy of his Holy Nature obliges him to fulfil his Word, but 'tis if we do not fail on our part by careleſsneſs of our Duty. A Preſumer may ſeal Aſſurance to himſelf, and be deceived in this great Matter, but *God will not be mocked*. If we prove falſe in the Covenant, he will be faithful, and exclude thoſe from Heaven that were neglectful of the Conditions to which it is promiſed.

3. The Goſpel is ſtiled, *a Teſtament* ſealed in the Blood of Chriſt, confirm'd by his Death. The Donation of eternal Bleſſings in it is not abſolute and irreſpective,

ſpective, but the Heirs are admitted to the poſſeſſion of the Inheritance according to the Will of the rich liberal and wiſe Teſtator. There can be no regular Title or Claim made out without performing what is required. And this *is the Will of God and Chriſt our Sanctification*, without which we cannot enjoy it.

Now from hence we may ſee the admirable Agreement between theſe two Notions, that Heaven is a Gift, and a Reward. 'Tis a Reward in the order of giving it, not due to the Work, but from the Bounty of the Giver. God gives Heaven to thoſe that faithfully ſerve him. But their Service was due to God, of no worth in reſpect of Heaven; ſo that Man's Work is no Merit, and God's Reward is a Gift. Our everlaſting Glory muſt be aſcribed to his moſt free Grace, as much as the pardon of our Sins.

I ſhall now proceed to conſider, what the Goſpel declares to be indiſpenſably requiſite in order to our obtaining of Heaven: this is compriz'd in the holy Change of Man's Nature,

which I will briefly unfold, and ſhew how neceſſary it is to qualify us for Celeſtial Glory.

1. This holy Change is expreſs'd in Scripture by the new Birth. Our Saviour, with a ſolemn repeated Aſſeveration, tells *Nicodemus*; *Verily, verily, except a Man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.* Sin is natural to Man from his Conception and Birth, and infects with its Contagion all his Faculties. This is fomented and cheriſht by Temptations that eaſily encompaſs him. The Underſtanding is polluted with evil Principles, full of ſtrong Prejudices, and lofty Imaginations againſt the ſupernatural Myſteries of Salvation. 'Tis full of Ignorance and Folly, and from hence either rejects them as incredible, or deſpiſes them as impertinent or unprofitable. The Will is depraved and perverſe, full of unruly and unhallowed Affections. The Senſes are luxurious and rebellious. In ſhort, Man is ſo viciouſly and ſenſually inclined, ſo *alienated from the Life of God*, as if he had no diviner Part within him, that ſhould aſpire to a ſpiritual Bleſſedneſs, that ſhould regulate and

John 3. 3.

con-

controul the exceſs of the inferiour Appetites. This is the unhappy Character Satan impreſs'd on him in his Fall, and without Renovation upon an infinite account he is uncapable of ſeeing God. This Renovation conſiſts not in the change of his Subſtance, as the Water was miraculouſly turn'd into Wine at the Marriage in *Cana* of *Galilee:* the ſame Soul with its eſſential Powers, the ſame Body with its natural Senſes, the Work of the Creator remains; but in the cleanſing of his ſtain'd Nature, in the ſanctifying his Faculties that are the Springs of his Actions, the whole Man is quickned into a Divine Life, and enabled to act in conformity to it. And of this the new Birth is a convenient Illuſtration. An active Principle of Holineſs is planted in him, that ſprings up into viſible Actions. The Apoſtle particularly expreſſes it in his earneſt Prayer for the *Theſſalonians, The very God of Peace ſanctify you wholly, and preſerve your whole Spirit, Soul and Body blameleſs, till the coming of Jeſus Chriſt.* Every Faculty is renewed, and every Grace infuſed that conſtitutes the Divine Image. The Mind is renewed by Spiritual Light, to believe the Truth and

Goodneſs of unſeen Things promiſed, the reality and dreadfulneſs of Things threatned in the Word of God. It ſees the trueſt Beauty in Holineſs, the higheſt Honour in Obedience to God, the greateſt Equity and Excellence in his Service. The Will is renewed by holy Love, a purifying Flame, and feels the attractive virtue of our bleſſed End, before all deſirable Things on Earth, and determines to purſue it in the vigorous uſe of proper means. The Body is made an holy Inſtrument fit for the renewed Soul. In ſhort, the natural Man becomes Spiritual in his Perceptions, Reſolutions and Actions. *All things are become New.* There is a firm aſſent, an inviolable adherence to thoſe moſt precious Objects revealed in the Scripture, and a ſincere choſen conſtant Obedience flows from the renewed Faculties. And from hence we may diſtinguiſh between regenerating Grace, and formal Hypocriſy in ſome, and the proficiency of Nature, and power of common Grace in others. A Hypocrite in Religion is acted from without, by mercenary baſe reſpects; and his Conſcience being cauteris'd, handles ſacred Things without feeling: a regenerate

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Perſon is moved by an internal living Principle, and performs his Duties with lively Affections. Natural Conſcience under the compulſion of Fear, may lay a reſtraint upon the outward Acts of Sin, without an inward Conſent to the Sanctity of the Law. Renewing Grace cleanſes the Fountain, and the Current is pure. It reconciles the Affections to the moſt Holy Commands. *I love thy Law becauſe 'tis pure*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt.

A Moral Principle may induce one to abſtain from many Sins, and to perform many praiſe-worthy things in conformity to Reaſon. But this is neither ſanctifying nor ſaving; for it only prunes Sin as if it were a good Plant, and does not root it up; it compounds with it, and does not deſtroy it. There may be ſtill an impure Indulgence to the ſecret luſtings of the Heart, notwithſtanding the Reſtraint upon their Exerciſe. And many Duties may be done on lower Motives, without a divine reſpect to the Commands and Glory of God.

But renewing Grace ſubjects the Soul to the whole Royalty of the Law, uniformly inclines it to expreſs Obedience to all its Precepts, becauſe they are pure,

pure, and derived from the eternal Spring of Purity. It mortifies Concupiſcence, and quickens to every good Work, from a Principle of Love to God, and in this is diſtinguiſht from the moſt refined unregenerate Morality. In ſhort, there may be a ſuperficial tincture of Religion from common Grace, a tranſient Eſteem, vaniſhing Affections, and earneſt Endeavours for a time after Spiritual Things, and yet a Perſon remain in a ſtate of Unregeneracy. But renewing Grace is a permanent ſolid Principle, that makes a Man *partaker of the Divine Nature*, and elevates him above himſelf.

This holy Change is wrought by Divine Power. Our Saviour tells *Nicodemus*, *Except a Man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* The Analogy of a new Birth ſignifies, that 'tis entirely the Work of the ſanctifying Spirit, that conveys a Principle of Life in order to the Functions of it. 'Tis the living Impreſſion of God, the ſole Efficient and Exemplar of it, the Fruit and Image of the Divine Vertues. 'Tis expreſt by the *new Creature.* The production of it is attributed to God's Power diſplaying it ſelf in a peculiar excel-

excellent way, even in that preciſe manner, as in making the World. For as in the firſt Creation all things were made originally of nothing, ſo in the ſecond, the Habit of Grace is infuſed into the Soul that was utterly void of it, and in which there was as little preparation for true Holineſs, as of Nothing to produce this great and regular World. And altho there is not only an abſolute privation of Grace, but a fierce reſiſtance againſt it, yet creating invincible Power does as infallibly and certainly produce its Effect in forming the new Creature, as in making the World. From hence it appears that preventing renewing Grace is ſo intirely the Work of God; as his forming the humane Body from the Duſt of Earth at firſt. But with this difference, the firſt Creation was done without any ſenſe in the Subject, of the efficiency of the Divine Power in producing it: but in the new Creation, Man feels the vital Influence of the Spirit, applying it ſelf to all his Faculties, reforming and enabling them to act according to the quality of their Nature.

And by the way we may obſerve the admirable Grace ſhewed to Man in the reno-

renovation of his corrupted Nature. In the compoſition of his Being are united a Spirit like the Angels, and a Body like terreſtrial Animals, by which he partakes of the ſpiritual and natural Life: but he has peculiar Favours conferred upon him. For, whereas his Soul ſinn'd with the Angels, and his Body dies with the Beaſts, yet God is pleaſed to reſtore them by his glorious Power. An Angel after Sin never repents, and is therefore incapable of Pardon, and irrecoverably diſinherited of Heaven: a Beaſt after Death never revives: but though Man ſins and dies, yet his Soul may be renewed by Divine Grace, and his Body ſhall be raiſed in an incorruptible Glory.

Now the indiſpenſable neceſſity of this holy Change is evident from the Words of our Saviour, for he ſpeaks univerſally, *Except a Man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.* He does not ſimply declare that an unregenerate Man ſhall not, but with the greateſt *Emphaſis*, cannot, to ſignify an abſolute impoſſibility of it. The *Jews* highly preſumed of the priviledg of their carnal Birth, they ſprang from the pure and noble Blood of *Abraham*, God's

God's Friend; they had the Seal of the Holy Covenant mark'd in their Fleſh: and hence it was proverbial amongſt them, that every *Iſraelite* ſhould have a part in the World to come. But our Saviour overthrows this vain conceit, and tells them that the ſupernatural Birth entitles to the ſupernatural Inheritance. Circumciſion then, and Baptiſm now, without real Grace is an ineffectual ſign, of no avail to Salvation. In the quality of Sons, we are Heirs of God's Kingdom. And that honourable Relation we have upon a double account; by Adoption and Regeneration. Divine Adoption is not a meer change of our ſtate, a naked Declaration that one ſhall be dignified with the Title of God's Son; but a holy Nature is always infuſed into the Perſon, whereby he is made like to God in his Excellencies. In this it differs from humane Adoption, that gives the Name and Arms, the Honour and Eſtate of the Adopter to a Perſon, without conveying any of his intellectual or moral Endowments. Whom God adopts, he begets to a Divine Life. Beſides, our Saviour purchaſed this high Priviledg for us: *God ſent his Son made of a Woman, under the Law, to redeem them*

Rom. 8. 17.

Gal. 4. 7.

them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons: By Union with him we receive the inveſtiture of this Dignity. *Now whoever is in Chriſt is a new Creature.* For the quickning Spirit, that is to the Soul what the Soul is to the Body, the principle of Life and Strength, of Beauty and Motion, and an active purifying Faith that is influential upon all other Graces, are the Band of that vital Union: So that as all in *Adam* are univerſally corrupt by the firſt Birth, all that are in Chriſt are made holy by a new Birth. But of this I ſhall ſpeak in the next Chapter more fully, under a diſtinct Head. Briefly, the Spirit of Grace that ſanctifies, is the Spirit of Adoption that ſeals our Right to that Kingdom.

Now the Reaſons why this Change muſt be in order to our obtaining of Heaven, are theſe:

1. There is an exquiſite Wiſdom ſhines in all God's Works, in diſpoſing them for the ends to which they are appointed: and is it not monſtrouſly abſurd to imagin, he will admit into his Preſence and Kingdom, thoſe that are abſolutely unqualified for its Bleſſedneſs, and oppoſite to its Purity?

2. His

2. His invariable Juſtice excludes for ever all unholy Perſons from Heaven. For in the laſt Judgment God will be glorified as a Governour, in the diſtribution of Rewards with reſpect to the Obedience and Diſobedience of Men. 'Tis worthy of obſervation, that the Actions of God on the reaſonable Creatures are of two ſorts. Some proceed from his ſoveraign good Pleaſure, of which there is no motive or reaſon in the Subjects on which they are terminated. Thus by a free and inſuperable Decree (when all Mankind, laps'd and miſerable, was in his view) he choſe ſome to be *Veſſels of Mercy*, and by priviledg ſeparated them from the reſt that finally periſh. Now what induc'd him to place a ſingular Love on the Elect? There was nothing in them to incline his Compaſſion, being equally guilty and depraved with the reſt of the Progeny of *Adam*. This difference therefore is to be reſolved into his unaccountable and adorable Will, as the ſole cauſe of it. Thus God declares it to be his glorious Prerogative, *I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy, and I will have Compaſſion on whom I will have Compaſſion.* And this is no unjuſt accep-

acceptance of Perſons: For as a Benefactor, he may diſpenſe his own Favours as he pleaſes. A Gift from meer and arbitrary Bounty may be beſtowed on ſome, and not on others, without injuſtice. But there are other Actions of God for which there is an evident reaſon in Men on whom they are terminated. Thus as the ſupreme *Judg, without reſpect of Perſons*, he will judg and reward *every Man according to his Works*. The Evangelical Law (as was toucht on before) is the rule of eternal Judgment, and gives a right from the gracious Promiſe of God, to all penitent Believers in the Kingdom of Heaven, and excludes all impenitent Infidels. Divine Juſtice will illuſtriouſly appear then in diſtinguiſhing Believers from Unbelievers by their Works, the proper Fruits either of Faith or Infidelity. All the thick Clouds of Diſgraces, Calumnies, Perſecutions, that often oppreſs the moſt ſincere Chriſtians here, ſhall not then darken their Holineſs; and all the ſpecious appearances of Piety, which the moſt artificial Hypocrites make uſe of to deceive others, ſhall not conceal their Wickedneſs. And accordingly the one ſhall be abſolved and glori-

1 Pet. 1. 17.

Rom. 2. 16.
Acts 26. 18.

glorified, the others condemned and puniſh'd for ever. In ſhort, without violation of his own righteous eſtabliſhment in the Goſpel, God cannot receive the unholy into his Glory. Heb. 12. 14.

3. Beſides the Legal Bar that excludes unſanctified Perſons from the beatifick viſion of God, there is a moral incapacity. Suppoſe that Juſtice ſhould allow Omnipotence to tranſlate ſuch a Sinner to Heaven, would the Place make him happy? Can two incongruous Natures delight in one another? The happineſs of Senſe is by an impreſſion of Pleaſure from a ſuitable Object: The happineſs of intellectual Beings ariſes from an entire conformity of diſpoſitions. So that unleſs God recede from his Holineſs, which is abſolutely impoſſible, or Man be purified, and changed into his likeneſs, there can be no ſweet Communion between them. Our Saviour aſſigns this Reaſon of the neceſſity of Regeneration in order to our admiſſion into Heaven: *That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.* According to the quality of the Principle, ſuch is what proceeds from it. The Fleſh is a corrupt Princi-

ple, and accordingly the Natural Man is wholly carnal in his propenſions, operations, and end. The Diſeaſe is turn'd into his Conſtitution. He is dead to the Spiritual Life, to the actions and enjoyments that are proper to it: Nay, there is in him a ſurviving Principle of Enmity to that Life: not only a mortal coldneſs to God, but a ſtiff averſation from him, a perpetual reſiſtance and impatience of the Divine Preſence, that would diſturb his voluptuous enjoyments. The Exerciſes of Heaven would be as the Torments of Hell to him, while in the midſt of thoſe pure Joys his inward inclinations vehemently run into the loweſt Lees of Senſuality. And therefore till this Contrariety, ſo deep and predominant in an unholy Perſon, be removed, 'tis utterly impoſſible he ſhould enjoy God with ſatisfaction. As it was neceſſary that God ſhould become like Man on Earth, to purchaſe that Felicity for him, ſo Man muſt be like God in Heaven before he can poſſeſs it. Holineſs alone prepares Men for Celeſtial Happineſs; that is againſt the corruption and above the perfection of meer Nature.

I ſhall now proceed to conſider more particularly what is requiſite in order to our obtaining of Heaven.

1. Faith in the Redeemer is abſolutely required of all that will partake of the Salvation purchaſed by him. *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son; that whoever believes in him, ſhould not periſh, but have Eternal Life.* John 3. 16. This is the Spirit and Subſtance of the Goſpel, therefore I will briefly unfold it. The Son of God having aſſumed the human Nature, and performed what was neceſſary for the expiation of Sin, the Father was ſo pleaſed with his Obedience, that from his loweſt State he rais'd him to Divine Glory, and gave him ſupream Authority, and all-ſufficient Power to communicate that Glory to others. Thus our Saviour declares; *Thou haſt given him* (i. e. *the Son*) *power over all Fleſh, that he ſhould give Eternal Life to as many as thou haſt given him.* John 17. 2. And he exhorts the People, *Labour for that Meat that endures unto Eternal Life, which the Son of Man ſhall give unto you, for him hath God the Father ſealed.* John 6. Now this glorious Life is not given to all, but only to thoſe who are united to him. As *Adam*, the Phil. 2. 8, 9.

principle of the carnal corrupt Nature, derives Guilt and Death to all his Progeny: ſo Jeſus Chriſt (who is oppoſed to him) the Head and Prince of the renewed State, communicates Life and Glory to his People. The Apoſtle expreſſes it, *As in Adam all dye*, his natural Deſcendants are involv'd in his Condemnation; *even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive:* that is, all that are ſpiritually united to him, ſhall partake of his glorious Reſurrection. And St. *John* tells us, *He that hath the Son, hath Life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not Life.* The having the Son, upon which our right to Eternal Life depends, is believing in him. Faith has a principal Efficiency in receiving Chriſt, therefore 'tis expreſt by that Act; *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God,* (and conſequently Heirs of Glory) *to as many as believed on his Name.* And Chriſt is ſaid *to dwell in our Hearts by Faith.* This is not a meer aſſent to the Doctrines of the Goſpel concerning the Dignity of his Perſon, that he is in ſo high and glorious a Relation of being the Eternal Son of God, and the infinite value of his Merits, whereby he is able to ſave

1 Cor. 15. 22.

1 John 5. 12.

John 1. 12.

Ephes. 3. 17.

all

all that come unto God by him, and his merciful compaſſionate Nature to embrace returning Sinners, and the excellency of the benefits purchaſed by him, but ſuch a Belief as ſways the Will and Affections to receive him upon God's terms for our Salvation. Faith is ſeated in the whole Soul, in the Mind and Heart, and accepts of Chriſt intirely as Prophet, Prieſt, and King. The parts of the Mediator's Office, are inſeparably connected, and all the Effects of them are communicated to the ſame Perſons. *Jeſus Chriſt is made of God to Believers,* 1 Cor. 1. *Wiſdom*; to cure their Ignorance and Folly; *Righteouſneſs*, to aboliſh their Guilt; *Sanctification*, to renew their Natures; *and Redemption*, to free them at laſt from the Grave, and bring them to Glory. From hence 'tis clear, that the Faith, which is juſtifying and ſaving, includes in its Nature, as dependance and truſt in Chriſt as a powerful and merciful Mediator, that is able and willing to reconcile us to God, and make us for ever happy in his Favour; ſo a ſincere reſolution of Obedience and Subjection to all his holy Commands, even to the plucking out of the right Eye, and the cutting off the right hand, the parting

with the moſt pleaſing or profitable Sins. For the Promiſes of God that are the Rule of Faith, make an offer of Chriſt upon theſe Conditions to us:

Acts 5. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to* Iſrael, *and forgiveneſs of Sins.*

Rom. 8. And only *the Juſtified ſhall be glorified.* Thoſe therefore who deſire a partial intereſt in him as a Saviour, out of abſolute neceſſity to eſcape Hell, and will not out of Love ſubmit to him as their Prince, have not *that Faith that is unfeigned*, and gives a title to Eternal Life by the Promiſes of the Goſpel.

2. We muſt chuſe Heaven as our ſupream Happineſs, and regard it as the main end of our Lives. Man fell from his Duty and Felicity by preferring ſenſual Pleaſure before the Favour of God, and became guilty of the greateſt Diſobedience and Diſhonour to his Maker, and is reſtored by the holy change of his Will, the ſetting his Affections on a pure Spiritual Bleſſedneſs. This ſublimeth the Will, and turning its Love and Choice from the Creatures to God, is the effect of Divine Grace, and wrought in a rational way. For Man is not moved as artificial Engines by force, nor as

as Brutes from neceſſity, their Faculties being determined by the outward application of Objects: he is not drawn up to Heaven by ſuch a natural impreſſion, as Steel by the Load-ſtone, nor forc'd by a violent motion as a Stone aſcends, but as an underſtanding free Agent, by the direction of the enlightned Mind, and the conſent of the Will, an elective unconſtrained Faculty. And herein the Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Equity of God's Tranſactions with Man appears. His Wiſdom, in that as he has ordered in the whole ſphere of Nature, that the active Powers of every Creature, be drawn forth into exerciſe for their preſervation, and accordingly he is pleaſed to work in and by them; ſo the Underſtanding and Will, the Principles of Operation in Man, are to deliberate and chooſe in order to his Happineſs. Otherwiſe the rational Faculties would be in vain. His Goodneſs and Equity, in that he ſets before them Eternal Life as the Reward of Obedience. God will be glorified by him as a Law-giver and a Benefactor, and has ordained in the Goſpel, that all who chuſe and diligently ſeek the Kingdom of Heaven ſhall infallibly obtain it, and none be

deprived of it but for their neglect. The Decree of a final ſtate of Miſery, though not in time, yet is conſequent in the order of cauſes to the obſtinate reluctancy of Sinners againſt reſtoring Grace, and the wilful forſaking their own Mercies. Therefore God vindicates the Equity of his Proceedings with Men by their own Principles, and with tender pity expoſtulates, *Why will ye die?* The corrupt Will, declining from God, and adhering to the Creature as its Happineſs, is the true cauſe of Man's ruin. This will infinitely clear the Wiſdom and Juſtice, the Purity and Goodneſs of God from all Imputation.

The choice of Heaven for our Felicity is primarily to be determined, for 'tis from the proſpect of it that all holy Counſels derive their Life and Vigour. As in drawing the Picture of a Man, the firſt work is to delineate the Head, not only as the part that in dignity and eminence is above the reſt, but as it regulates the drawing of the other parts, and gives a juſt proportion and correſpondence between them, without which the whole Figure becomes diſordered and monſtrous. Thus in the moral conſideration

tion of Man, that which is primarily to be conſidered is the Soul, and its final Felicity, as incomparably more excellent than the Body and its Pleaſures: for this will have a powerful influence upon the whole Life, directing to avoid what is inconſiſtent and impertinent, and to do what is conducive to it.

Now this being a matter of unſpeakable importance, I will,

Firſt, Shew what the regular Choice of Heaven includes, as to its Qualities and Effects.
Secondly, Direct how to make this Choice.
Thirdly, Preſent ſome powerful Motives to excite us to it.

The Qualities of this Choice are three.

1. It muſt be ſincere and cordial.
2. Early, in our firſt and beſt Days.
3. Firm and conſtant.

1. It muſt be ſincere and cordial. The moſt eſſential and active Deſire in humane Nature is to Happineſs; but there being two kinds of good Things preſented

preſented to the Will, that ſolicit the Affections, the Pleaſures of Senſe, and ſpiritual-Joys, from hence it is that that which makes Men happy is the Object of Election. And although there is nothing more uniform and inviolable than the natural inclination to Happineſs, yet the great diſtinction of Mankind ariſes from this ſource, the regular or perverſe uſe of this Inclination, the wiſe or miſtaking choice of Happineſs. Now the ſincerity of our Choice is diſcovered, when 'tis clear and entire, ariſing from a tranſcendent eſteem of the Favour and Enjoyment of God as our chief Good, and abſolutely requiſite for us. And from hence it is evident that the Choice of true Happineſs, neceſſarily includes the deſpiſing and rejecting of the falſe Happineſs that ſtands in competition with it. There cannot be two reigning Principles in the Soul: for it cannot vigorouſly apply it ſelf to two Objects at the ſame time. Our Saviour has decided it, *No Man can ſerve two Maſters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or hold to the one and deſpiſe the other: ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* The Maſters are irre-

irreconcileable, and their Commands are directly oppoſite. It was as poſſible to place upon the ſame Altar the Ark of God, and the Idol of the *Philiſtins*, as that Heaven and the World ſhould compound and take equal ſhares in our Affections. Indeed, if the Conceptions in the Mind are but faint and floating of the univerſal ſatisfying Goodneſs of the Object propoſed to make us happy, the Will remains in ſuſpence; but when 'tis clearly and ſtrongly repreſented, the Heart is drawn entirely to embrace it. Divine Grace, by the illumination of the Underſtanding, purifies and changes the depraved Will, and heals the diſtempered Affections. The wiſe Merchant that had a diſcerning Eye ſaw reaſon enough to part with all, that he might gain the *Pearl of Price*, the Grace and Glory of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Apoſtle declares his reſolute contempt of the concurrence of all the Prerogatives either the Law or the World could afford him, that he might have an Intereſt in Chriſt, the Reconciler and Reſtorer of Man to the Favour and Fellowſhip of God. *But what things were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for*

for Chriſt; yea doubtleſs I count all things but loſs for the Excellency of the Knowledg of Jeſus Chriſt my Lord, for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung, that I might win Chriſt. The glorious Goſpel is the brighteſt and moſt pleaſant Light that ever ſhone upon the World, a Revelation of the deepeſt Wiſdom and moſt admirable Love, wherein the Combination of God's holy and wonderful Counſels for our Salvation is unfolded; and accordingly St. *Paul*, with the greateſt Life of Affection, ſets forth his value of it, and by full and moſt vilifying Expreſſions, rejects all things in compariſon of it.

2. The Sincerity of the Heavenly Choice is diſcovered by a zealous obſervance of the Means requiſite in order to it. Inanimate things incline to reſt in their Centre, the Rational intend and purſue it. The bleſſed End, when valued and reſpected according to its worth, excites and directs the Affections and Endeavours in that order and meaſure as is proportionable to its Excellency, and the Difficulties of obtaining it. There may be a naked eſtimation, and ſome deſires of Eternal Happineſs

pineſs ſimply conſidered, yet the Will remains incompleat and undetermined in its choice: for the End in conjunction with the Means is propounded to us, and the carnal Man will not conſent to the Means. He diſlikes the Holineſs of Religion, and will rather forfeit Heaven, than ſubmit to ſuch ſtrict terms. Though with *Balaam*, in a fit of Devotion, he ſays, *O that I might die the death of the Righteous, and that my laſt End might be like his*; yet from Indulgence to his ſenſual Inclinations, he will not live as the Righteous. All his Wiſhes of true Happineſs are ſoon ſtrangled by the predominant love of ſome Vanity. 'Tis ſaid of the *Iſraelites, they deſpiſed the pleaſant Land*, not abſolutely in it ſelf, for it was *the Glory of all Lands*, abounding with things for the ſupport and delight of Man; but conſidering its diſtance, a Wilderneſs waſte and wild interpoſing, and the Enemies to be encountred, they did not think it worthy of undergoing ſuch Hazards and Difficulties. The Land of *Canaan* was a Type of Heaven, both with reſpect to its pleaſantneſs, and the manner of the *Iſraelites* obtaining it. Their Title to it was derived from the rich Bounty of God, there

Pſal. 106. 14.

therefore 'tis called the *Land of Promiſe*; but it was to be poſſeſs'd by Conqueſt. Thus the Celeſtial *Canaan* is the pure Gift of God, but the actual enjoyment of it is obtained by victorious reſiſtance, againſt the Enemies of our Salvation. And Carnal Men deſpiſe this pleaſant Land, the Promiſe being inſeparably joined with Precepts of Duty and Obedience, from which they are averſe. But he that chuſes ſincerely, is joyful and vigorous in the uſe of means for acquiring his moſt deſired Good. Ardent Affections, like *Elijah*'s Chariot of Fire, raviſh the Soul above this ſenſible World, to the place where God dwells in Glory. Zeal animates his Endeavours, as the Motion of the Heart diffuſes the Spirits into the Arteries, to convey Life to all parts of the Body. *One thing* (ſaith the inflamed Pſalmiſt) *have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the Houſe of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire into his Temple.* The ſenſual Man is ranging abroad for ſatisfaction, and ſhoots all the Game that croſſes his Eye; but the Soul that has a diſcovering Light, and feeling heat of the divine Beauty, unites all

all its deſires in God, and with affection to an Extaſy longs for the enjoyment of him, and the endeavours are in ſome proportion to the deſires. Our Saviour tells us, *That from the days of* John *the Baptiſt until now, the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force.* Some previous Rays of the Sun of Righteouſneſs appeared in his Miniſtry, and produc'd ſuch a holy Ardency in thoſe Converts, that with all reſolution, diligence and earneſtneſs they ſought to be partakers of the Bleſſedneſs revealed. Lazy Deſires, eaſy Proſecutions, ſluggiſh Attempts, diſcover that the Heart is not throughly engaged for the ſpiritual Eternal Good. When the End is truly deſigned, it will give Law to the Actions. This is viſible in Men who are wholly led by Senſe, how ſagacious, how ſollicitous are they to accompliſh their Ends and baſe Deſigns? They try all ways either by fine diſſimulation, or toilſome induſtry, to obtain their Deſires. No time is too much in their gainful Affairs, or voluptuous Enjoyments. They transform the Night to lengthen out the Day for their Profit, they vail the Day to lengthen out the Night for their Eaſe and Pleaſure. But alas,

alas, Heaven is only regarded by the By; as if the intellectual Soul were only given to dwell with the Body on Earth, the place of its Baniſhment, and direct Affairs here below, and not to lead in the way to Heaven, the place of its Nativity, and prepare for another World. The Work of Salvation is followed with that remiſs degree of Affection, as if it were a ſlight matter whether performed or neglected. Theſe Perſons carry their Conviction in their Boſoms; for they are ardent and active to obtain inferior and infinitely leſs concerning Ends, but with that cold application mind the ſuperior nobler End of Man, that it is wholly fruſtrate, which plainly ſhews it was never ſeriouſly intended by them.

The ſight of Worldly Men ſo active and vigilant to proſecute their low Deſigns, ſhould quicken us to ſeek with greater diligence and alacrity the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Righteouſneſs thereof. A Carnal Wretch, urged by the ſting of a brutiſh Deſire, with what impatience doth he purſue *the Pleaſures of Sin that are but for a ſeaſon?* An ambitious Perſon, with what an intemperate height of Paſſion does he chaſe

chaſe a Feather? A covetous Man, how greedily does he purſue the Advantages of *the preſent World that paſſes away, and the Luſts thereof?* Ah! how do they upbraid our indifferent Deſires, our dull Delays and cold Endeavours, when ſuch a high Prize is ſet before us? Who is able to conceive the raviſhing Pleaſure of the Soul when it firſt enters through *the beautiful Gate* of the Celeſtial Temple, and ſees the Glory of the Place, and *hears a Voice from the Throne, Enter into thy Maſter's Joy*, to be happy with him for ever? The ſerious belief of this, will draw forth all our active Powers in the Service of God.

3. The ſincerity of our Heavenly Choice declares it ſelf, in the temper and frame of our Hearts, with reſpect to all temporal Things in this World. For our main and happy End being eſtabliſhed, that it conſiſts not in ſectilar Riches, and Honours, and the Pleaſures of Senſe, but in the clear Viſion of God, the bleſſedneſs of the Spirit; it follows that all preſent things are in our uſe ſo far Good or Evil, and to be deſired or not, as they are profitable or prejudicial to our obtaining

Salvation, as they conduct or divert us from Heaven. A wiſe Chriſtian looks on temporal things not through the Glaſs of diſordered Paſſions, that are impetuous and impatient for what is grateful to them, but with reference to his future Happineſs. He conſiders the train of Temptations that attend an exalted Condition, and deſires ſuch a portion of theſe things, as may redound to the Glory of the Giver, and be improved for his own Salvation. This Purity of Affections our Saviour teaches us: For in his Divine Form of Prayer, the true Directory of our Deſires, are ſet down in an admirable order all things we are to pray for. And they reſpect the End, or the Means. The End is the primary Object of our Deſires, accordingly the two firſt Petitions concern our bleſſed End, as it reſpects God and our ſelves. We pray, *Hallowed be thy Name*, that is, by the reverence and adoration of all his Subjects: and, *Thy Kingdom come*, that is, for the manifeſtation of his Eternal Glory in the next World, that we may reign with him. The Means in order to this End are of two ſorts. Some conduct to it by themſelves, thoſe are

are the good things deſired in the third and fourth Petitions; and ſome lead to it by accident, and thoſe are the freedom from Evils expreſs'd in the laſt Petition. The good things deſired, either have a direct influence upon our obtaining Happineſs; and they are ſumm'd up in our univerſal Obedience to God's Will, expreſs'd in the third Petition, *Let thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*; or they are ſuch as by way of ſubſerviency promote our Happineſs, and thoſe we pray for in the fourth Petition, *Give us this day our daily Bread.* And 'tis obſervable there is but one Petition for Temporal Bleſſings, and 'tis the laſt in the order of thoſe that concern good things. And that ſingle Petition is ſo reſtrained, that 'tis evident by its Tenour, that earthly things are not abſolutely good to be deſired for themſelves, but relatively and ſubordinately to our eternal Good. Daily Bread we muſt ask of our heavenly Father, the neceſſary ſupport of the preſent Life, without which we cannot exerciſe our internal or external Powers and Faculties in his Service, but not Delicacies and Abundance for the luxurious Appetite.

The difference of Conditions in the preſent World is very great: as in *Pharaoh*'s Dream, ſome Ears of Corn were ſo full and weighty that they bended with their weight; others ſo thin and blaſted, that they were as Stubble for the Fire. Thus ſome abound in all Felicities poſſible in this Life, others are *chaſtened every Morning*, under various and continual Afflictions. Now this infallible Principle being planted in the Heart, that all preſent things are to be improved with reſpect to our future Happineſs, will moderate the Affections in Proſperity, ſo to uſe the World that we may enjoy God, and make us not only patient, but pleaſed in Adverſities, as they are preparatory for Heaven.

Frui eſt amore alicujus rei inhærere propter ſeipſam uti autem, quod in uſum venerit, ad id quod amas obtinendum referre. *Aug.* de Doct. Chriſt.

The Original of all the Sins and Miſery of Men, is their perverſe abuſe of things, by turning the Means into the End, ſetting their Affections of Love, Deſire, and Joy upon ſenſible things, as their proper Happineſs, with inconſiderate neglect of the ſpiritual eternal ſtate, to which all other things ſhould be ſubſervient. As if one diſeaſed and ſickly in a Forreign Country, that could not poſſibly recover Health but in

in his Native Air, in his return thither, invited by the pleaſantneſs of the way, ſhould take up his reſidence in it, and never arrive to his own Country. Among the *Weſt Indians* ſome are *reported to be ſo ſwift in running, that no Horſe can keep pace with them, and they have a conſtant rule in their Diet, to eat of no Beaſt, or Bird, or Fiſh that is ſlow in motion, fancying it would transfuſe a ſluggiſhneſs in them. The Chriſtian Life is by the Apoſtle compar'd to a Race, and earthly things by an inſeparable property of Nature load and depreſs the Soul, that it cannot with vigour run the *Race ſet before it*. The Believer therefore who intends *for the high price of his Calling*, and is true to his End, will *be temperate in all things*. Nay, he will not only be circumſpect, leſt they ſhould check with his great Deſign, but wiſely manages them in ſubſerviency to it. St. *Paul charges them that are rich in this World, to do good, to be rich in good Works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, laying in ſtore for themſelves a good Foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal Life.*

* *Acoſt.*

1 Tim. 6. 18, 19.

And the fixed aim at Heaven as our Felicity, will reconcile an afflicted ſtate to us. When temporal Evils are effectual means to promote our everlaſting Happineſs, the amiableneſs and excellency of the End changes their Nature, and makes thoſe Calamities that in themſelves are intolerable, to become light and eaſy. *The Poor, the Mourners, the Perſecuted are bleſſed now, becauſe theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* The Apoſtle, tho under variety of ſharp Troubles, yet expreſſes his ſenſe with that mitigation, as but lightly touch'd with them: *as ſorrowful, but always rejoicing.* From hence he tells us, that with unfainting courage he proſecuted his glorious End. *For our light Afflictions that are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding weight of Glory.* This ſeriouſly believed and conſidered, will make us underſtand the Harmony and Conſent of the moſt diſcordant parts of God's Providence. This will reconcile the ſeverity and roughneſs of his Hand, with the tender Compaſſions of his Heart towards his Servants. This will dry up Rivers of unprofitable Tears that flow from the Afflicted, and make the Croſs of Chriſt a light burthen.

For

For their heavieſt Afflictions are not only conſiſtent with his Love, but the Effects of it, being influential upon their Happineſs. We are now toſs'd upon the alternate Waves of Time, but 'tis that we may arrive at the Port, the bleſſed Boſom of our Saviour, and enjoy a peaceful Calm; and *ſo we ſhall be ever with the Lord.* Words of infinite ſweetneſs! This is the Song of our Proſperity, and the Charm of our Adverſity: Well might the Apoſtle add immediately after, *Therefore comfort one another with theſe Words.*

4. The ſincere Choice of Heaven as our final Happineſs, will make us aſpire to the greateſt height of Holineſs we are capable of in the preſent ſtate. For the End has always a powerful Vertue to transform a Man into its Likeneſs: and Heaven is a ſtate of perfect conformity to the Holy God. This difference is obſervable between the Underſtanding and the Will in their Operations: The Underſtanding in forming Conceptions of Things, draws the Object to it ſelf. The Will is drawn by the Object it chuſes, and is always faſhioning and framing the Soul into an intire conformity to it. Thus Carnal

Objects when propounded as the End of a Man, ſecretly imprint on him their Likeneſs, his Thoughts, Affections, and whole Converſation is Carnal. As the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of the Worſhippers of Idols, *they that make them are like unto them, ſo is every one that truſteth in them:* whatever we adore and eſteem, we are changed into its Image. Idolaters are as ſtupid and ſenſeleſs, as the Idols to which they pay Homage. Thus when God is choſen as our ſupream Good and laſt End, by converſing with him, the Image of his glorious Holineſs is derived on the Soul, and it becomes Godly: the Heart is drawn by his attractive Excellencies, and the Life directed to him. This being a Point of great importance, I ſhall further prove and illuſtrate it. There is no deliberating about the degrees of that which is loved for it ſelf as our End. More or leſs may reſpect the Means that are valued and uſed to obtain it, but the Love of the End is vaſt and unlimited. A Phyſician endeavours to recover his Patient to ſound and perfect Health, that being the End of his Art. He that ſeeks for Honour or Riches, is not content with a Mediocrity of Succeſs, but drives on his Affairs

fairs to the full period of his Deſires. An ardent lover of Learning with a noble jealouſy ſtrives to excel others in Knowledg. In ſhort, no Man deſigns and longs for a thing as his Happineſs, but will uſe all diligence to gain the preſent and full poſſeſſion of it. Therefore it cannot be imagined that any Perſon ſincerely propounds the enjoyment of Heaven as his End, but Love will make him fervent and induſtrious to be as Heavenly as is poſſible here. He will ſtrive by bleſſed and glorious Gradations, to aſcend to the perfection of his Aims and Deſires, *to be holy as God is holy in all manner of Converſation, to be pure as Chriſt is pure.* We have an admirable inſtance of this in St. *Paul*, who declares, *Brethren, I count not my ſelf to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before, I preſs toward the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* His Progreſs was great, yet that did not make him ſlack in the proſecution of his End. He laboured to attain the Precedent of our Saviour, to feel the Power of *his Death and Life, to apprehend* Phil. 3. 13, 14.

hend Chriſt intirely and perfectly as *Chriſt had apprehended him. He was very diligent* to improve the Divine Image in his Heart and Life.

From hence we may diſcover the vanity of their Hopes, that are of lukewarm Affections in Religion, (the abhorr'd character of *Laodicea*) who eſteem it a prudent Principle, as convenient for their carnal eaſe and intereſt, not to be *earneſt in following Holineſs*. Vices in mediocrity are tolerable with them, only the exceſs is condemned. They content themſelves with a mediocrity in Religion, and are preſumptuous and ſecure, as the Church that ſaid, *I am rich, and have need of nothing*. They boaſt as if they had found out the temperate Region between the burning Line and the frozen Pole. They account all that is above their degrees in Religion, to be furious or indiſcreet Zeal, and all below to be dead, cold Profaneneſs. They cenſure thoſe for Hypocriſy or unneceſſary Strictneſs, who are viſibly better, and ſtand upon proud compariſons with thoſe who are viſibly worſe. And thus ſet off themſelves by taxing others. But how eaſily do Men deceive and damn themſelves?

Can

Can we have too much of Heaven upon the Earth? Can we become too like God, when a perfect conformity to him is our Duty and Felicity? Indeed Moral Vertue conſiſts in a Mediocrity, not of the habitual Quality, but of the Affections and Actions between the vicious extremities. Fortitude conſiſts in the mean between Cowardiſe, and raſh Boldneſs; but how much the more confirm'd the couragious Habit is, ſo much the more a Man excells in that Virtue. Liberality conſiſts between an indiſcreet Profuſeneſs, and ſordid Avarice; Patience between a ſoft Delicacy, and ſtupid Inſenſibility. Thus Philoſophic Virtue glories in its Beauty as pure and intire, between two vicious Deformities. And the Religion of many is Paganiſm dreſt up in a Chriſtian Faſhion. But this mediocrity only belongs to inferiour Vertues, that reſpect things of created limited goodneſs, and is determined according to the worth of their Nature. But divine Graces reſpect an Object ſupreamly Good, and their perfection conſiſts in their moſt excellent degrees, and the moſt intenſe Affections and Operations that are leading to it. Faith in its Obedience, Hope in its Aſſurance,

ſurance, Love in its Ardour can never exceed. When the Object is Infinite, a mediocrity is vicious. Humility can never deſcend too low, nor Love aſcend too high: for reflecting upon our natural and moral Imperfections, that we were raiſed from nothing, that we are defiled and debaſed with Sin, we cannot have too low thoughts of our ſelves. And ſince God the Soveraign Being, infinite in Perfections, and infinitely amiable is the Object, no bounds or meaſure muſt be ſet to our Affections, but with all our united Powers, *all the Heart, and with all the Soul, and with all the Mind, and with all the Strength, we muſt love him*, and pleaſe him, and endeavour to be beloved of him.

There are others will acknowledg their defects, and tell you they do not pretend to eminent Sanctity, to the Graces of the Apoſtles and Martyrs, nor aſpire to their degrees in Glory, they are content with a lower place in Heaven, and leſs ſtrict Religion is ſufficient for their purpoſe. This deceit is ſtrengthned by Popery, that enervates and diſſolves many of our Saviour's Precepts, by teaching they are not Laws obliging all Chriſtians to Obedience, that

that will attain to eternal Life, but Counſels of Perfection: if they are not done 'tis no Sin, and the performance of them meritoriouſly intitles to a richer Crown. And though Men by impure Indulgencies pleaſe their ſenſual Affections, yet by taſting Purgatory in the way, they may come to Heaven on eaſier terms, than a univerſal reſpect to God's Commands, and an equal care to obſerve them. But Death will confute all theſe feeble wretched Pretences, for though the Saints above ſhine with an unequal brightneſs, as the Stars differ in Glory; yet none are there but Saints. And thoſe who do not mourn under their Imperfections, and unfeignedly deſire and endeavour to be better, were never really good. The ſlothful Servant that did not waſte but neglect to improve his Talent, was caſt into *outer darkneſs*. There are different degrees of puniſhments in Hell, but the leaſt miſerable there are miſerable for ever. In ſhort 'tis a perfect contradiction, a Prodigy, for any Man to think he is ſincere in his Choice, and prepar'd in his Affections for the pure glorious Felicity in Heaven, that does not labour to *cleanſe himſelf from all pollutions*

of

of Fleſh and Spirit, and to perfect Holineſs in the fear of God.

Secondly, The choice of Eternal Felicity muſt be early in the prime of our days. The rule of our Duty, and Reaſon binds us *to remember our Creatour in our Youth*, to pay to him the firſt fruits of our Time and Strength. When we are ſurrounded with inticing Objects, and the Senſes are entire and moſt capable to enjoy them, when the electing Powers are in their vigour, then 'tis juſt we ſhould live to God, obey him as our Law-giver, and prefer the fruition of him in Heaven, the reward of Obedience, before all the pleaſures of Vanity. 'Tis very honourable and pleaſing to God to give the Heart to him, when the Fleſh and the World ſtrongly ſolicit to withdraw it. 'Tis a high endearment of the Soul to him, when his Excellencies are prevalent in the Eſteem and Affections above all the Charms of the Creatures. And 'tis an unſpeakable ſatisfaction to the Spirit of a Man, to declare the truth and ſtrength of his Love to God by deſpiſing Temptations when they are moſt inviting, and the Appetite is eager

eager for the enjoyment of them. But alas! how many neglect their Duty, and defer their Happineſs? They think it too ſoon to live for Heaven *before the evil Days come, wherein they ſhall have no pleaſure*; when they cannot ſin, and vainly preſume they can repent. The danger of this I have conſider'd in the Diſcourſe of *Death*, and ſhall therefore proceed to the next Head.

Thirdly, Our Choice of Heaven muſt be conſtant and laſting.

The two principal Rules of the Spiritual Life are to begin and end well: to fix and eſtabliſh the main Deſign for everlaſting Happineſs, and from a determinate Reſolution and ratified Purpoſe of Heart to purſue it with firmneſs and conſtancy: to live for Heaven, and with readineſs and courage to die for it, if the Glory of God ſo require. Perſeverance is indiſpenſably neceſſary in all that will obtain the Eternal Reward.

For the clearing this moſt important Point, I will,

Firſt,

Firſt, Repreſent from Scripture the Idea of Perſeverance, that is attended with Salvation.

Secondly, Conſider why 'tis ſo ſtrictly required.

Firſt, Saving Perſeverance includes the permanent reſidence of Grace in the Soul: 'Tis compoſed of the whole Chain of Graces, the union of holy Habits that are at firſt infuſed into a Chriſtian by the ſanctifying Spirit. When Eternal Life is promiſed to Faith, or Love, or Hope, 'tis upon ſuppoſal that thoſe Graces being planted in the Heart ſhall finally proſper. *He that is faithful to the Death, ſhall inherit the Crown of Life.* Rev. 2. *'Tis Love that never fails,* 1 Cor. 13. that ſhall enter into Heaven. *'Tis Hope firm unto the End*, that ſhall be accompliſhed in a glorious Fruition. If Grace be diſſeiſed by a uſurping Luſt, Apoſtacy will follow, and the forfeiture of our right in the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. Grace muſt be continually drawn forth into exerciſe according to our ſeveral ſtates and duties, and the various

rious occaſions that happen in our courſe through the World. Thoſe *who are light in the Lord, are commanded to walk as Children of the Light*; to ſignify the excellency and purity of the Chriſtian Life. *Thoſe who live in the Spirit muſt walk in the Spirit*; that is, by a conſpicuous courſe of Holineſs declare the vigour and efficacy of the divine Principle that is communicated to them. *Paulum ſeptultæ diſtat inertiæ celata virtus:* Vertue that breaks not forth into viſible Actions, is not worthy of the Name. The meer abſtaining from evil is not ſufficient, but all the poſitive acts of the holy Life are to be conſtantly done. In diſcharging both theſe parts of our Duty, compleat Religion is expreſt, and the power of Grace conſiſts.

3. Perſeverance includes not only continuance in well-doing, but fervour and progreſs towards Perfection. There are two fix'd States, the one in Heaven, the other in Hell. The bleſſed Spirits above are arrived to the height of Holineſs. The Devil and damned Spirits are ſunk to the loweſt extremity of Sin. But in the middle ſtate here, Grace in the Saints is a riſing growing

Light, and Sin in the Wicked improves every day, like Poiſon in a Serpent that becomes more deadly by his Age. We are injoined not to remain in our firſt Imperfections, but to *follow Holineſs* to the utmoſt iſſue of our Lives, to its intire conſummation. For this end all the diſpenſations of Providence muſt be improved whether proſperous or afflicting. And the Ordinances of the Goſpel were appointed that in the uſe of them we may be *changed into the divine Image from Glory to Glory.*

4. Preſeverance is required notwithſtanding all Temptations that may allure or terrify us from our Duties; what ever affects us one way or other, while we are clothed with frail Fleſh. 'Tis the fundamental Principle of Chriſtianity declared by our Saviour, *If any Man will come after me*, that is, be my Diſciple and Servant, *let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow me*; even to be crucified with him, rather than wilfully forfeit his Integrity and Loyalty to Chriſt. He muſt by a * ſacred fixt reſolution deveſt himſelf of all things, even the moſt valued and deſirable in the preſent World, and

* Natator amnem interpoſitum ſuperaturus, exuitur, nec tamen hoc tanto apparatu, quod ſe diſpoliaverit, tranſnatabit, niſi totius Corporis niſu torrentis impetum ſcindat, & laborem natationis exhauriat. *Paulin.*

and actually forſake them, nay entertain what is moſt diſtaſteful, *and reſiſt unto Blood*, rather than deſert his Duty.

1. He muſt with unfainting Patience continue in doing his Duty, notwithſtanding all Miſeries and Calamities, Loſſes, Diſgraces, Torments, or Death it ſelf, which wicked Men, and greater Enemies, the Powers of Darkneſs, can inflict upon him. *To them who by patient continuance in well doing ſeek for Glory, Honour and Immortality, Eternal Life is promiſed.* Rom. 2. *He that endures to the End* (notwithſtanding the moſt terrible Sufferings to which he is expoſed for Chriſt's ſake) *ſhall be ſaved.* Mat. 10. 22. In this a Chriſtian muſt be the expreſs image of his Saviour, *who for the joy that was ſet before him endured the Croſs, deſpiſed the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of God.* Diſgrace and Pain are Evils that humane Nature has a moſt tender ſenſe of, yet the Son of God with a divine generoſity and conſtancy endured them in the higheſt degrees. He was ſcorn'd as a feigned King, and a falſe Prophet. He ſuffered a bloody Death, and by the Croſs aſcended to Glory. And we muſt follow him, if we deſire to be where he is.

2. But this is not the only trial of a Chriſtian. Proſperity is a more dangerous Enemy to the Soul, though Adverſity be more rigorous.

Juven. *Sævior armis*
Incumbit luxuria:

For the Spirit is excited by Perils and Difficulties to ſeek to God for Strength, and with vigilant reſolute Thoughts unites all its Powers to oppoſe them; but 'tis made weak and careleſs by what is grateful to the ſenſual Inclinations. It keeps cloſe the Spiritual Armour in the open encounter of Dangers that threaten its ruin, but is inticed to put it off by the careſſes and blandiſhments of the World. It does not ſee its Enemies under the diſguiſe of a pleaſant Temptation. Thus Sin inſinuates its ſelf, and by ſtealing ſteps gets into the Throne without obſervation. A Man is wounded with a pleaſant Temptation as with the Plague, that flies in the dark, and Grace is inſenſibly weaken'd. From hence it is that Adverſity often reforms the Vicious, and Proſperity corrupts the Vertuous. Now Perſeverance muſt be of proof againſt Fire and

and Water, againſt what ever may terrify or allure us from our duty.

5. Saving Perſeverance excludes not all Sins, but total Apoſtacy, and final impenitency, which are fatal and deadly under the New Covenant. *If the Righteous turneth away from his righteouſneſs, and committeth Iniquity, and doth according to all the Abominations that the wicked Man doth, ſhall he live? all his Righteouſneſs that he hath done ſhall not be mentioned, in his Treſpaſs that he has treſpaſſed, and in his Sin that he hath ſinned he ſhall die.* Ezek. 18. 24. *If any Man draw back, my Soul ſhall have no pleaſure in him, ſaith the Lord.* Heb. 10. 38. Theſe Threatnings imply, there is a poſſibility of the Saints falling away conſidered in themſelves, but not that they are ever totally deſerted by the Holy Spirit, and left under the reigning Power of Sin. The Threatnings are intended to awaken their Care, and are Preſervatives of them from Ruin, and have a ſingular Influence on their Perſeverance. A vigilant and cautious Fear eſtabliſhes the certainty of their Hope. Indeed from the Reliques of weakneſs and corruption in the Saints, they ſometimes actually fall into preſumptuous Sins, and by

rebellious relapſes wound Conſcience, and let out much of the vital Spirits, their Graces and Comforts. But though the divine Nature in them is miſerably waſted by ſuch Sins, yet 'tis not aboliſh'd. As after the Creation of Light, there was never pure and total Darkneſs in the World. Grace does not conſiſt in a Point, but is capable of Degrees. The new Creature may decline in Beauty and Strength, yet Life remain. Between a lively and a dead Faith there may be a fainting Faith; as in St. *Peter*, for certainly our Saviour was heard in his Prayer for him, that his *Faith ſhould not fail* in his dreadful Temptation. The Saints do not by a particular fall extinguiſh the firſt living Principles of Obedience, Faith and Love; nor change their laſt end by an entire turning from God to the World. In ſhort, a ſingle act of Wickedneſs does not reduce them into a ſtate of Unregeneracy: for 'tis not the matter of the Sin ſingly conſidered, but the diſpoſition of the Sinner that denominates him. If Grace in the Saints ſhould utterly periſh, as ſome boldly aſſert, their recovery would be impoſſible. For the Apoſtle tells us, that *if thoſe who were enlightned, and had taſted*

taſted of the Heavenly Gift, that had been under ſome common Workings and lower Operations of the Spirit, if ſuch *fall away univerſally*, and live in a courſe of Sin oppoſite to their former illuminations and reſolutions, it is impoſſible to renew them by Repentance; how much more then if thoſe who were truly ſanctified by the holy Spirit, ſhould intirely loſe all thoſe gracious habits planted in them in their Regeneration? But *David*, though guilty of Adultery and Murder, Sins of ſo foul a Nature as would diſhonour Paganiſm it ſelf, and *made the Enemies of God to blaſpheme*, was reſtored by Repentance. The Goſpel propounds a remedy not only for Sins committed before Converſion, but after it. *If any Man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous.* God does not revoke the Adoption, nor reverſe the Juſtification of a Believer, but upon ſcandalous diſorders, the effects of Juſtification are ſuſpended with reſpect to the new contracted guilt, till there be ſincere and actual Repentance. He is not diſinherited, but his right to the Kingdom of Heaven is eclipſed as to the comfortable ſenſe of it,

may ſuſpended, till by renovation he is qualified and made fit for the enjoyment of that pure Inheritance. For thoſe Sins which are a juſt cauſe of excommunicating an Offender from the Church on Earth, would exclude him from the Kingdom of Heaven without Repentance. Our Saviour tells us, *what is bound on Earth, is ratified in Heaven.* And the Apoſtle expreſly declares of thoſe kinds of Sin for which Profeſſors muſt be removed from the Communion of Saints here, that they are an excluſive bar from the Kingdom of Heaven.

1 Cor. 5. 11. *But I have written to you, not to keep Company, if any that is called a Brother be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner: with ſuch a one, no not to*

1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. *eat. And know ye not that the Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.* If one that is truly a Child of God fall into any of theſe Sins, till by an extraordinary Repentance he is prepared for Pardon, he cannot obtain it, nor have a comfortable

ſortable hope of entring into Heaven. For only thoſe *who are juſtified are glorified.* Indeed it is not imaginable where *the Seed of God remains*, the vital Principle of Grace, as it does in *all that are born of God*, but that notorious Sins that cannot be concealed from the view of Conſcience, will cauſe ſtings and ſorrows proportionable to their malignity, and conſequently a hatred and forſaking of them. Now Perſeverance principally reſpects the End of our Courſe. There may be Interruptions in the way for a time, but if with renewed Zeal and Diligence we proſecute our bleſſed End, we ſhall not fall ſhort of it.

Secondly, I come now to conſider the ſecond thing propounded, The Reaſon why Perſeverance is requiſite in all that will obtain Eternal Life, and 'tis this, That their Sincerity may be diſcovered by conſtancy in Obedience under all Trials. *Bleſſed is the Man that endures Temptation, for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.* The Law required unſinning Obedience as the

the Condition of Life, the Goſpel accepts of Sincerity, but if that be wanting, there is no Promiſe that gives right to the Reward. Now Sincerity implies ſuch an entire Love of God, as makes a Perſon ſubmit to all Duties commanded in his Law, and all Trials appointed by his Providence. A high Example we have of this in *Abraham*, when he was commanded to offer up his only Son *Iſaac*, and by his own Hands, for a Burnt-Offering. This was to kill a double Sacrifice at one Blow, for the Life of *Abraham* was bound up in *Iſaac*: he lived in him more dearly than in himſelf; all his Joy, all his Poſterity by *Sarah* had died in *Iſaac*. What reſentments, what reſiſtance of Nature did he ſuffer? yet preſently he addreſs'd himſelf to perform his Duty. Whoever ſaw a more glorious Victory over all the tender and powerful Paſſions of humane Nature? O unexampled Obedience! being an Original without any Precedent to imitate, and without a Copy to ſucceed it. After this clear infallible Teſtimony of his Sincerity, the Angel declar'd from Heaven, *Now I know that thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt*

haſt not withheld thy Son, thine only Son from me. And 'tis ſaid concerning the followers of the Lamb, that *they loved not their Lives unto the Death.* The Love of Chriſt that animated them in all their Sufferings, was ſweeter than Life, and ſtronger than Death.

Indeed there was a wonderful difference in the behaviour of the Martyrs under Sufferings, but in all the ſame Perſevering Grace was evident, though working variouſly. Some in the moſt beautiful Flower of their Age encounter'd Fire and Sword, Tormentors and Torments, with that ſenſible Joy, with thoſe Songs of Praiſe to Chriſt, as if they ſaw the Heavens open with St. *Stephen*, and their Saviour ready to receive and crown them. But many others, as * *Chryſoſtom* teſtifies, went to the Tribunals, to the Theatres, to Death, with many appearances of Fear. Upon hearing the wild Beaſts roar, they were ſtruck with horror, at the ſight of the Executioners and the Inſtruments of Torment, they were pale and trembling. The Fleſh ſeem'd to cry out, *O let this Cup paſs from me*, yet weak and faint, it followed the Spirit, that corrected the natural

* Homil. 6. de laud. Paul.

natural deſire, with *not my Will, but thine be done.* As the Moon in Eclipſe, though obſcure, yet goes on in a regular courſe, as when 'tis full of Light by the reflection of the Sun: So thoſe deſolate Martyrs, though as it were forſaken, and deprived of the bright Beams of Comfort, yet perſever'd in their Profeſſion of the Truth. When one Word to renounce Chriſtianity would have ſaved them, no Torments could force it from them, but they patiently endured all. Now in theſe the Combat of Nature was viſible, and the admirable Power of Grace. They firſt overcame their own Fears, the reluctancy of the carnal part, their Affection to whatever is deſirable in the World, which is the nobleſt Victory, and then the Cruelty of their Perſecutors. In them was verified the Teſtimony of the Spirit, *Here is the patience of the Saints, Here are they that keep the Command of God and the Faith of Jeſus.*

But how many appear faithful while their Faith is not to be ſhewed by difficult Works, and proved by Sufferings. The Seed that fell on the ſtony Ground, ſprang

ſprang up as hopeful as the Seed in the good Ground at firſt; but when Tribulation came, it wither'd away, wanting the Root of Sincerity. And that which was ſown among Thorns, was choak'd by the Cares and Pleaſures of the World. Some Luſt in the Heart interweaves with the Affections, and cauſes Apoſtacy. How many from glorious Beginnings have made a lamentable End? not only Mercenaries in Religion, whoſe Zeal is a foreign Complexion, not ſpringing from an inward Principle of Life and Health, relinquiſh even the profeſſion of Godlineſs, when their Gain ceaſes, but ſome who have thought themſelves ſincere, yet in times of danger their Reſolutions, like the morning Dew, have ſuddenly vaniſh'd. As the fooliſh Builder that computed not the Charges of his deſigned Work, began to raiſe a magnificent Structure, but unable to finiſh it, laid the Foundation in his own Shame. They repented their Choice of Heaven, when they ſaw what it muſt coſt them, and would ſave the World with the loſs of their Souls.

Others that began in the Spirit, and with raiſed Affections ſet out in the ways

ways of Godlineſs; yet by the allurements of ſenſual Luſts and Temptations, (and therefore with greater † Guilt) leave their firſt Love, and end in the Fleſh. They fall from high Profeſſions, but received by ſoft Pleaſures feel not the Fall. Theſe were never ſincere, and never had a Right to Heaven. They took up ſudden Reſolutions, not grounded in ſerious and deep Thoughts, and for a Flaſh were hot and active, but with great levity return to their former Luſts. The Apoſtle tells us of ſuch, *it had been better for them they had not known the Way of Righteouſneſs, than to turn back and voluntarily to forſake it.* 'Tis obſerved that boiling Water taken off from the Fire, congeals more ſtrongly than that which was never heated: becauſe the ſubtile Parts being evaporated by the Fire, the more terreſtrial Parts remaining are more capable of Cold. So thoſe who have felt the Power of the Word in their Affections, and afterwards loſe that holy heat, become more harden'd in their Sins. God juſtly withdraws his Grace, and the evil Spirit that was expell'd for a time, returns with ſeven worſe, and aggravates his Tyranny.

† Quæ juſtior venia in omnibus cauſis, quam voluntarius, an quam invitus peccator implorat? Negationem quanta compellunt, ingenia carnificum, & genera pœnarum? Quis magis negavit, qui Chriſtum vexatus, an qui delectatus amiſit? Qui quum amitteret doluit, an qui quum amitteret luſit? *Tert.* de pudicit.

To

To conclude; Since the certainty of Salvation is conditional, if we perſevere in a holy State, let us beware of a corrupt Confidence, and a vicious Dejection of Spirit, the truſting in our ſelves, or diſtruſting God. To prevent the truſting in our ſelves, conſider,

1. The moſt excellent Creatures are by the inſtability of Nature liable to defection, ſubject to a corruptive change. Of this the fallen Angels are a dreadful Example, who of their own motion, untempted, ſinned in Heaven.

2. The Danger is greater of falling away, when they are urged and ſolicited by a violent or grateful Temptation. Thus our firſt Parents fell, and loſt more Grace in an Hour, than can be recovered by their Poſterity in all Ages to the end of the World.

3. When there is ſupervenient Corruption in the Creature, that inclines them with earneſt propenſity to forbidden Things, and takes Flame from every Spark, the Danger is extream. Like a beſieged City that is in great hazard of taking, by Aſſaults from without, and Conſpiracies from within. Let us therefore be very watchful over our Hearts and

and Senſes, and keep as much as is poſſible at a ſafe diſtance from Temptations. And be very diligent in the uſe of all holy Means to confirm and fortify our Reſolutions for Heaven. God promiſed to *Hezekiah* 15 Years, but not to preſerve his Life by Miracle; he was obliged to repair the waſtings of Nature by daily Food, and to abſtain from what was noxious and deſtructive to his Body. *The Apoſtle excites Chriſtians, to work out their own Salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that works in them to will and to do of his good Pleaſure. Let him that ſtands take heed leſt he fall.* None are a more eaſy Conqueſt to the Tempter, than thoſe who preſume upon their own Strength. We ſhould be always jealous of our ſelves, from the ſad Examples of Apoſtacy in every Age. St. *Ambroſe* teſtifies from his own knowledg, that many after the courageous enduring of cruel Torments for Religion, the tearing open their Sides that their Bowels appeared, and the burning of ſome parts of their Bodies, yet when led forth to finiſh the *Victory of Faith*, to be a triumphant *Spectacle to Angels and Men*, when the bleſſed Rewarder was ready to put the Martyrs

Denique ſæpe cognovimus, quoniam quem formidoloſa carnificum pompa non terruit, nec diviſi lateris ſulcus infregit, nec ardentes laminæ à triumphalis fortitudinis vigore abducere potuerunt, eum inter ſacra præmia conſtitutum, Uxor teneræ prolis oblatione, miſerabilis unius lachrymæ miſeratione decepit.

tyrs Crown on their Heads, at the ſight of their mourning Wives and Children in the way, were overcome by Pity the weakeſt Affection, and fail'd in the laſt act of Chriſtian Fortitude. *We muſt pray to be ſtrengthned with all Might, according to his glorious Power, unto all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs.* For ſome may vigorouſly reſiſt one ſort of Temptation, and render themſelves to others. And if finally vanquiſh'd by one of thoſe Enemies, we loſe our Victory and Crown.

And as Preſumption betrays the Soul into the Devil's Snares, ſo a vicious dejection of Spirit from a diſtruſt of Relief from God in our Difficulties, and his aſſiſtance with our unfeigned endeavours for Salvation is very pernicious. For this damps Induſtry, and cauſes either a total neglect, or uncomfortable uſe of Means for that End. Many Chriſtians conſidering their Graces are weak, their Nature fickle and apt to revolt, are ready (as *David* ſaid, *One day I ſhall periſh by the Hand of* Saul) to conclude ſadly of the Iſſue of their Condition. To encourage ſuch, let them conſider, that Perſeverance is not only a Condition, but a Privilege of

the Covenant of Grace; For that aſſures us of ſupply of ſpiritual Strength to the ſincere Believer for performing the Condition it requires. Indeed if Grace were the meer product of Free-Will, the moſt fervent Reſolutions would vaniſh into a Lie, upon the Aſſault of an overpowering Temptation. As *Hezekiah* acknowledged, that the *Aſſyrian* Kings had *deſtroyed the Gods of the Nations that were no Gods, but Idols the work of Mens Hands.* But ſanctifying Grace is the effect of the Holy Spirit, and he that *begins that good Work in the Saints, will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt.* He that inclin'd them joyfully to chuſe the Spiritual Eternal Good, will bind their unconſtant Hearts, that by a faithful adherence they ſhall cleave to their Duty and Felicity. God has moſt graciouſly declared, *I will put my Spirit into their Hearts, that they ſhall never depart from me.* The Promiſe is founded in the unchangeable Love of God to his People. Were God, as Man, ſubject to Variation, there might be Jealouſies in Believers leſt they ſhould loſe his good Will. As thoſe who depend on Princes, are ſuſpicious leſt from the natural inconſtancy of the human Will,

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a new Favourite ſhould ſupplant them. *But whom God loves, he loves to the End.* The Apoſtle prays for the *Theſſalonians, that God would preſerve them blameleſs until the coming of Chriſt*, by this Conſideration, *faithful is he that calleth you, he will do it.* He ſpeaks of the Internal Call, that opens the Heart, and overpowers all Reſiſtance. As when the Angel came with a Light ſhining in the Priſon to St. *Peter*, and ſtruck him on the Side, bid him ariſe quickly, looſed his Chains, and led him through the Guards, open'd the Doors, and reſtored him to Liberty. The effectual calling of a Sinner, is the viſible and infallible Effect of electing Mercy; and God is unchangeable in his own purpoſe, and faithful to his Promiſes of bringing all ſuch by Sanctification to Glory. The ſame Apoſtle tells the Saints at *Corinth*, That the Redeemer would confirm them to the End: *God is faithful, by whom ye are called.* Grace that was at firſt inſpir'd, is continually actuated by the Spirit, who is *ſtiled the Earneſt of the Saints Inheritance.* So that whereas the Angels that excell'd in ſtrength, kept not their firſt State of Purity and Glory, but are ſunk into

Corruption and Miſery, yet true humble Believers, though weak, and encompaſt with many Difficulties, ſhall be preſerved from deſtructive Evil, and raiſed to an unchangeable Eſtate of Perfection. This is as truly admirable, as if the Stars ſhould fall from Heaven, and Clods of Earth aſcend and ſhine in the Firmament. The Apoſtle who acknowledged *his inſufficiency of himſelf to think a good Thought*, yet triumphantly declares, *I can do all things* (within the compaſs of his Duty) *through Chriſt that ſtrengthens me.* The Love, Fidelity and Power of God are a ſure Fountain of Aſſiſtance to every Chriſtian, that ſincerely reſolves and endeavours to proſecute his laſt and bleſſed End.

I ſhall now come to the Directions how to fix our Choice aright.

This is a matter of everlaſting Conſequence, it therefore becomes us with the moſt intenſe application of Mind to conſider it, and according to the advice of Wiſdom, *to keep the Heart with all diligence; for out of it are the iſſues of Life.*

Indeed the choice were not difficult between lying Vanities and ſubſtantial Bleſſedneſs,

Bleſſedneſs, if uncorrupted Reaſon had the ſuperior ſway: but in this lapſed ſtate of Nature, the Underſtanding and Will are ſo depraved, that preſent things pleaſing to ſenſe, raviſh the Heart into a Compliance. Men are deceived, not compelled into ruin: the ſubtile Seducer prevails by fair Temptations. This will be evident by reflecting upon the frame and compoſition of Man, as he conſiſts of *Spirit*, *Soul and Body*, and the manner of his acting. The Spirit is the intellective diſcerning Faculty, the Seat of Reaſon, capable to compare and judg of the qualities of things, and foreſee their iſſues. The Body includes the lower Faculties, the Senſes Fancy and Paſſions, that are converſant about preſent things. The Soul is the Will, the principle of Election, in the midſt of the other, as the Centre to which all their Addreſſes flow. Now upon the propoſal of the ſpiritual and carnal Good in order to Choice, the Will is to be directed by the Mind, and by its own Authority to rule the lower Paſſions. But alas! the Mind has loſt its primitive Light and Purity, Vigilance and Integrity, neglects its Duty, and from Ignorance, Error and carnal Pre-

judices often pleads for the Fleſh: and the Will, the rational Appetite, is voluntarily ſubordinate and inſlaved by the Senſitive. From hence it is that in the competition, Heaven with all its Glory is deſpiſed, and the preſent World embrac'd. To open this more particularly, conſider:

1. The Senſes can only taſte and enjoy groſſer dreggy Pleaſures.

2. The Fancy that depends upon them in its Operations, and is guided by their Report, conceives of Felicity only under the notion of ſenſitive Pleaſure. We may illuſtrate this by the practice of * *Aretius* a Painter, recorded with Infamy, who being often imployed to paint the Goddeſſes to be ſet in the Pagan Temples, always drew their Pictures by the Faces and Complexions of his Harlots, that the Objects of his impure Love might have Veneration, and a Divinity attributed to them, under the Titles, and pretence of *Minerva*, *Juno*, *Diana*, and the other Goddeſſes ador'd by the Heathens. This Impiety in an Idolater, is reſembled by Men who fancy Happineſs, (that is a ſpiritual divine Perfection enjoyed in the glorious Viſion of God) to be a carnal Fruition,

* Flagitio infigni, ſemper alicujus fœminæ amore flagrans & ob id Deas pingens ſub dilectarum imagine. Itaq; ſcorta ejus venerabantur. *Plin.*

Fruition, and having with ſenſible Colours and Lineaments repreſented it agreeable to their brutiſh Faculties, place it in their Hearts, and ſacrifice all their Thoughts, Affections, and Service to it.

The Fancy is very powerful in Men upon a double account.

1. The Underſtanding naturally receives the Notions of Things by Phantaſms that are ſtill mixing in its Contemplations. While the Soul is confined to a Tabernacle of Fleſh, it apprehends no Object without the precedent excitation of the Senſes. From whence it is impoſſible, that a Perſon abſolutely deprived of Sight from his Birth, ſhould have an Idea of Light or Colours; or that is born deaf, ſhould conceive what Sound is, the Senſe never having imparted an account of it to them. And the Image of the Object is not immediately tranſmitted from the Senſe to the Mind, but firſt to the Imagination, that prepares it for its view. And from hence the ſenſual Fancy is ſo predominant in ſweying the Judgment, and inclining the Will. As thoſe Counſellors of State that have the Ear of the Prince, and are continually with him, by

ſpecious Informations, and diſguiſing Truth, influence him to approve or reject Perſons and Things according to the various Aſpects given by them. The ſame Object propounded in a dark confuſed manner, weakly moves us, but varniſht and beautified with lively and pleaſant Colours by the Imagination, is armed with ſuch Power that raviſhes the eſteem of the Mind, and conſent of the Will. Now Celeſtial Happineſs being purely Spiritual, *ſuch as Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor entred into the Heart of Man to conceive*, though ſome diſcoveries be made of it by Revelation, yet the Imagination makes ſuch an obſcure detracting Idea of it, that it affects no more, than a dead Shadow drawn in ſome imperfect Lines of an exquiſite Beauty: But when the Fancy is warmed and enlivened by the preſence of ſenſible Objects, it makes a vigorous impreſſion of them upon the Mind, and that repreſents the Pictures of Pleaſure as very lovely and delightful to the Will, which preſently imbraces them.

2. The Fancy has a marvellous force upon the ſenſitive Appetite, that eagerly deſires what is repreſented as pleaſant,

ſant, though the enlightned Mind ſees through the Temptation, and knows 'tis a meer Dream, that brings neither ſolid nor durable Joy. One in a Feaver is pleaſed by imagining Fountains and Streams, though he knows that imaginary Waters cannot quench his Thirſt, nor afford the leaſt real Refreſhment. Now the ſenſitive Appetite being inflam'd by the Fancy, imparts a contagious Fire to the Will, and that induces the Mind, either to concur with it, and palliate the deceit, and to judg favourably according to its Inclinations, or makes it ſlack or remiſs in its Office, diverting the Thoughts from what might controul the Appetite; or if the Underſtanding ſtill contradicts, yet 'tis in ſo cold and ſpeculative a matter, *that the Law of the Members* rebels againſt the Superior Light, and is too ſtrong *for the Law of the Mind*, and that Saying is verified,

Video meliora proboq;
Deteriora ſequor.

I ſee what is worthy to be choſen, but purſue what is to be abhorr'd. Thus miſerably weak are the rational guiding Powers

Powers in Man ſince his Fall, thus imperious and violent the brutiſh Faculties. In ſhort, illuſion and concupiſcence are the principal Cauſes why the moſt noble and divine Good is undervalued and rejected in compariſon of inferior tranſitory Vanities. O the cheap Damnation of beguiled Souls! A Meſs of Pottage was more valuable to *Eſau*, than the Birth-right that had annext to it the Regal and Prieſtly Dignity. Unwiſe and unhappy Wretches! *that follow lying Vanities, and forſake their own Mercies.*

Thus I have briefly ſet down the proceſs of Mens fooliſh choice in this degenerate State. Now that we may with a free uncorrupted Judgment compare things in order to a wiſe Choice of true Felicity, it follows from what has been ſaid, that as the Apoſtle in obeying his Heavenly Commiſſion, *conferr'd not with Fleſh and Blood.* We muſt not in this matter of infinite importance, attend,

1. To the Suggeſtions and Deſires of the Senſes and carnal Appetite, which are the worſt Counſellors, as being uncapable of judging what is our proper Happineſs, deceitful and importunate. Firſt,

First, They are uncapable of apprehending Spiritual Eternal Things, which alone bring fit and compleat ſatisfaction to the Soul, and cannot look forward to the end of ſinful Pleaſures, and ballance the terrible Evils they leave at parting, with the ſlight vaniſhing content that ſprings from their Preſence. Therefore as blind Perſons lay hold on things they feel, ſo the ſenſitive Faculties, that are blind and brutiſh, adhere to groſs preſent enjoyment, not underſtanding the pure ſpotleſs Felicity that is to come, and deſpiſing what they do not underſtand. Now who would in an Affair upon which his All depends, adviſe with Children & Fools, whoſe Judgment of things is without Counſel, their Counſel without Diſcourſe, their Diſcourſe without Reaſon? There is nothing more contrary to the order of Nature, than for Men that ſhould affect with Judgment, to judg by their Affections.

2. The Carnal Appetite with its Luſts are very deceitful, a Party within holding correſpondence with our Spiritual Enemies, the Armies of evil Angels, ſo active and aſſiduous in conſpiring and accompliſhing the Damnation

of

of Men. The Devil in Scripture is called *the Tempter* by way of eminence, who manages and improves all Temptations, and his pernicious Deſign is by the Objects of Senſe, ordered and made more alluring and killing by his various Arts, to engage the Affections into a compliance, and ſo to gain the Will. Now our great danger is not ſo much from Satan the Enemy without, as from the Carnal Appetite, the Traitor within, that gives him the firſt and eaſy entrance into the Soul. He can only entice by repreſenting what is amiable to Senſe, but the corrupt Appetite inclines to the cloſing with it. He tempted Jeſus Chriſt, but was repell'd with ſhame, *having found nothing within him to work upon.* The perfect regularity of Faculties in our Bleſſed Saviour was not in the leaſt diſorder'd neither by his fairеſt Inſinuations, or moſt furious Aſſaults. And we might preſerve our innocence inviolable notwithſtanding all his Attempts, did not ſome corrupt Affection, cheriſh'd in our Boſoms, lay us naked and open to his poiſon'd Darts. The Apoſtle *Peter*, who had a Spiritual Eye, and diſcern'd wherein the ſtrength of our great Enemy lies, admoniſhes Chriſtians,

Chriſtians, *Dearly Beloved, I beſeech you, as Strangers and Pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, that war againſt the Soul.* And we are told by him, That *the Corruption that is in the World, is through Luſt.* The outward Objects are uſeful and beneficial in their kind, the abuſe of them is from Luſt. The Poiſon is not in the Flower, but in the Spider. 'Tis therefore infinitely dangerous to conſult, or truſt our carnal Faculties in this matter, for they are brib'd and corrupted, and will commend temporal things to our choice.

3. The ſenſual Affections are ſo numerous and clamorous, ſo vehement and haſty, that if they are admitted to counſel and give the deciſive Vote, the Voice of Conſcience will not be heard or regarded. In concernments of a lower Nature, 'tis conſtantly ſeen, that nothing more diſturbs Reaſon, and makes Men improvident & precipitant in their Determinations, than a diſordered Paſſion. From hence, 'tis a prudent Rule, That as 'tis not fit to eat in the height of a Fever, becauſe the Meat feeds the Diſeaſe, by increaſing the feveriſh, not the vital heat: ſo 'tis not good to deliberate in the heat of any Affection.

Affection. For then the Thoughts ſtrongly blow up the Paſſion, and ſmother Reaſon, and the Mind is rather a Party than a Judg: but after the declination of that Fever in the Soul, in a quiet interval, 'tis ſeaſonable to conſider. Now if any ſimple Paſſion when moved, tranſports and confounds the Mind, and makes it uncapable of judging aright, much more the love of the World, an univerſal Paſſion that reigns in Men, and has ſo many ſwarming deſires anſwerable to the variety of ſenſible things, and therefore is more unruly, laſting and dangerous than any particular Paſſion. In ſhort, ſenſual Affections captivate the Mind, and hinder its due conſidering the folly and obliquity of the carnal choice, and when incens'd (as diſtracted Perſons whoſe Strength grows with their Fury) violently break all the reſtraints the underſtanding can apply from reaſon and revelation.

2. In order to make a right Choice, we muſt be very watchful leſt the general Example of Men taint our Reaſon, and cauſe an immoderate eſteem of temporal things. *The whole World lies in Wickedneſs*, in a ſenſual Sty, without Conſcience

Conſcience of its Miſery, or care of regaining its Happineſs, deceived and pleaſed with ſhews of Felicity. The way to Hell is broad, as the inclinations of the licentious Appetite; pleaſant, as the delights of Senſe; ſo plain and eaſy, that Men go to it * blindfold; and ſo frequented, that it would force Tears from any conſidering Perſon, to ſee Men ſo haſty to meet with Damnation. When *Caliſto* the Harlot reproach'd *Socrates* that there were more followers of her Beauty than his Wiſdom; the † Philoſopher replied, That was not ſtrange, becauſe it was much eaſier to draw them in the way of Pleaſure, that is ſteep and ſlippery, than to conſtrain them to aſcend to Vertue, ſeated on a Hill, where the aſcent is ſlow, and with toil and difficulty. Now there is nothing more contagious than Example. We blindly conſent with the Multitude, and are poſſeſt with fooliſh Wonder, and carnal admiring of worldly Greatneſs, Treaſures and Delights, neglecting to make a due eſtimation of things. 'Tis the ordinary Artifice of the Devil to render temporal things more valuable and attractive to particular Perſons, from the common practice of Men who greedily

* Bion.

† Σὺ μὲν γὰρ ὅτι τὴν κατάντη αὐτοὺς πάντας ἄγεις, ἐγὼ δὲ ὅτι τὴν ἀρετὴν ἔκειν βιάζομαι, ὀρθία δὲ ἄνοδός ἐστι, καὶ ἀηδὴς τοῖς πολλοῖς. Ælian. l. 13. c. 32.

greedily purſue them as their Happineſs. As ſome crafty Merchants, by falſe reports raiſe the Exchange, to advance the price of their own Wares. The Men of the World are under the direction of Senſe, and think them only to be wiſe and happy that ſhine in Pomp, abound in Riches, and overflow in Pleaſures. The Pſalmiſt tells us of the proſperous Worldling, *that while he lives, he bleſſes his Soul; and Men will praiſe thee when thou doſt well to thy ſelf.* By vicious imitation our Judgments are more corrupted, and our Paſſions rais'd to higher degrees for painted Vanities. The Affections in the purſuit of earthly things are inflam'd by the contention of others. And when holy Deſires and Reſolutions ſpring up in Men, yet ſo powerful is the cuſtom of the World, that they often become ineffectual. As a Ship whoſe Sails are fill'd with a fair Wind, but makes no way, ſtopt by the force of the Current. Now to fortify us againſt the pernicious influence of Example, conſider,

1. 'Tis moſt unreaſonable in this Affair of ſo vaſt moment to be under the direction of the Multitude. For the moſt are ſottiſh and ſenſual, govern'd by

by the uncertain motions of a giddy voluble Fancy, and roving impetuous Paſſions; ſo that to be led by their example, and diſregard the ſolid immortal rules of heavenly Wiſdom, is as perfect madneſs, as for one to follow a herd of Swine through the Mire, and leave a clean Path that lies before him. If there were but few in an Age or Country that were deluded with falſe Appearances, it would be a diſgrace to imitate the practice of the Fooliſh: and ſhall the great numbers of the Earthly-minded give Reputation and Credit to their Error? He were a ſtrange Fool indeed, that ſhould refuſe a ſingle piece of counterfeit Money, and receive a great heap in payment, as if the number added a real value to them. 'Tis therefore a neceſſary point of Wiſdom to deveſt all † vulgar Prejudices, to ſeparate our ſelves from the Multitude, that we may ſee the vanity of Things that dazle inferior Minds.

† Nunquam de vitâ judicatur, ſemper creditur, ſanabimur, ſi modò ſeparemur à cœtu. *Sen.* de vit. Beat.

2. Conſider the univerſal Judgment even of the worldly Men in their laſt and ſerious Hours, when the Proſpect of Eternal Things is open before them. How vaſtly different are their Apprehenſions of Temporal Things in the re-

view, from what they were in their vicious Deſires? How often do they break forth in the ſorrowful Words of the Apoſtle, *We have been toiling all Night, and caught nothing?* When there are but a few remaining Sands in the Glaſs of Time, and Death ſhakes the Glaſs before them, how powerfully do they preach of the emptineſs and uncertainty of Things below, aud ſigh out in *Solomon*'s Phraſe, *All is vanity?* And this is more ſingularly obſervable in thoſe who have had the fulleſt enjoyment of earthly Things. How do they complain of the vain World, and their vainer Hearts, when Experience has convinc'd them of their woful Folly? *Solomon* who was among other Princes, as the Sun in the midſt of the Planets, that obſcures them by his illuſtrious Brightneſs, He that had ſurveyed this Continent of Vanity, to make an Experiment whether any ſatisfaction could be found in it, at laſt ſadly declares, that all things here below are but ſeveral kinds and ranks of Vanities, as ineffectual to make Men happy, as counterfeit Jewels of ſeveral Colours are to enrich the Poſſeſſor. Nay they are not only Vanity, but Vexation, an empty

ſhow

ſhow that has nothing real, but the vexation of diſappointment. And ſhall we not value the judgment of Men when they are beſt inſtructed, and give credit to their Teſtimony when they are ſincere? Certainly in their Approaches to the Divine Judgment they are moſt conſiderate and ſerious, they have the trueſt and juſteſt thoughts of Things, and moſt freely declare them. O the aſtoniſhing Folly of Men! they will not be convinc'd of the error of their ways, till they come to the end of them, and the Sun is ſet, and no time remains for their returning into the way of Life.

I ſhall proceed to ſhew further what is neceſſary to direct us in our choice, that we may not fall into the double Miſery, of being deceived with a falſe Happineſs for a little time, and deprived of true Happineſs for ever.

Firſt, A ſound and ſtedfaſt belief of unſeen Eternal Things.

Secondly, Serious Conſideration of the vaſt difference between things that are the objects of Sight, and that are the objects of Faith.

First, The ſound and ſtedfaſt belief of Eternal Things is requiſite to direct our choice aright. *Faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen.* Heb. 11. 1. It aſſures us of their reality and worth as if they were before our Eyes, and in our actual Poſſeſſion. This Divine Light governs and conducts the Will to chooſe wiſely, and excites all the practick Powers for the preventing the greateſt Evils, and the obtaining perfect Felicity. When the Devil, the deadly Flatterer, by inviting repreſentations of the World intices the Heart, the ſerious belief of the future reward ſo glorious and eternal, diſgraces the moſt ſplendid Temptations, and makes them ineffectual. *This is the Victory that overcomes the World, even our Faith.* If tempted to Laſciviouſneſs by the allurements of an earthly Beauty, Faith repreſents the angelical luſtre of the Saints, when they ſhall come with the unſpotted Lamb in his glorious appearance, and this unbinds the Charm, and makes the tempting Perſon an object not of Deſire, but Averſation. If tempted with Honour to a ſinful compliance, Faith repreſents ſo convincingly the Glory which

which all thoſe who preſerve their Conſcience and Integrity inviolable, ſhall receive at the univerſal Judgment, in the preſence of God, and the holy Angels, (as our Saviour has promis'd, *He that ſerves me, him will my Father honour*) and the confuſion wherein the moſt honourable Sinners ſhall then be cover'd, that with a generous diſdain all ſecular honours will be deſpiſed. And it is as powerful to enervate the Temptation of temporal Profit. We read of *Moſes, that by Faith, when he was come to Years,* (and therefore more capable to underſtand and enjoy what Felicity the brighteſt Honours and greateſt Riches could afford) *refuſed to be called the Son of* Pharaoh's *Daughter; chuſing rather to ſuffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleaſures of Sin for a ſeaſon; eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater Riches than the Treaſures of* Egypt: *for he had reſpect to the recompence of Reward.* And all the Evils which a wicked World, inſpir'd with rage from Satan, can threaten to fright us from our Duty, Poverty, Diſgrace, Baniſhment, nay Torments and Death, thoſe *terribles viſu formæ*, ſo heightned by the carnal Fancy, are eaſily overcome by a

ſincere and ſtrong Believer. Thus ſome who were urged by ſuch motives to renounce their Religion, told the Perſecutors, that Life was not ſweet to them if they might not live Chriſtians, nor Death bitter if they muſt die for Chriſt. A lively firm perſwaſion of the excellence and eternity of the Reward, what miraculous effects would it produce? Nothing would be impoſſible within the compaſs of our Duty, either to do or ſuffer in order to a glorious Immortality. Faith has a celeſtial Power, a magnetick Virtue to draw up the Heart from the Earth, and faſtens it to things above. It is not imaginable that a clear-ſighted Soul, that ſees a Good infinitely great, ſhould reject it for mean things to pleaſe the lower Deſires. We may as probably imagine, that a skilful Jeweller would part with the richeſt Oriental Pearls, for Cherry Stones to play with Children.

Nec veremur occidi, quos conſtat, quando occidimur coronari. *Cyp.*

From hence we may diſcover the true cauſe of the neglect of the great Salvation offered in the Goſpel, *the Word preached does not profit, not being mixt with Faith in them that hear it.* It is aſtoniſhing to conſider that Earth ſhould contend with Heaven for our Affecti-

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ons, and prevail againſt it; that Vanity ſhould turn the Scale againſt the *exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*; that Men ſhould purſue fleeting Shadows, and neglect the moſt excellent Realities, as if they could be happy here, and continue for ever, and hereafter there were neither Happineſs nor Eternity. But this releaſes the wonder, that *all Men have not Faith.* Eternal Things are not of conſpicuous moment in the carnal Ballance. Some are Infidels in Profeſſion, openly declaring themſelves to be without Religion, without God, and have the ſame credit of the Heaven and Hell diſcovered in the Goſpel, as of the *Elyſian Fields*, and *Stygian Lake*, the Fables of the Poets. Theſe live as if they ſhould never die, and die as if they ſhould never live in the other World, as if Death cauſed ſo deep a ſleep, that the Voice of the Son of God could not awaken them at the laſt day. Their Unbelief is not from Reaſon, but vicious oppoſite Affections; for the truth of the Eternal State is ſo clearly revealed, and ſtrongly eſtabliſh'd in the Goſpel, that the ſincere Mind muſt readily aſſent to it. But the Wicked cannot delight in the diſcovery of that

for which they are unprepared, and therefore try all ways to elude the Force of the moſt ſatisfying Arguments. Their Infidelity is obſtinate and incurable. An inſtance whereof we have in the *Phariſees*, who rejected our Saviour. Tho all the Characters of the *Meſſiah* were conſpicuous in his Perſon, tho his Doctrines were confirmed by Miracles, yet they would not yield up themſelves to that omnipotent conviction, ſo ſtrong were their carnal Prejudices againſt his humble State, and holy Doctrines. That Reproach is more juſtly due to Infidels under the Goſpel, than to *Iſrael* in the Prophet: *Who is blind as my Servant?* The Heathens who are blind from their Birth, and have only ſome glimmering apprehenſions that Eternity ſucceeds Time, are leſs culpable than thoſe who have infinitely more reaſon to believe it, and yet believe it leſs. The Plea for them will be a terrible Accuſation againſt ſuch Unbelievers. If a blind Perſon falls, it moves Compaſſion; but if one voluntarily ſhuts his Eyes againſt the Sun, and refuſes the Direction of the Light, and falls from a Precipice, his Ruin is the juſt Conſequence of his Folly. Simple Ignorance ex-

excuſes as to the degrees of the Fault, but affected wilful Ignorance, now Reaſon and Revelation with united Beams give ſo clear a proſpect into the Eternal World, aggravates the Guilt and Sentence of ſuch Unbelievers.

Beſides, the moſt who are Believers in Title, are Infidels in Heart. Our Saviour tells the *Jews*, who pretended the higheſt Veneration to the Writings of *Moſes*, *That if they had believed* Moſes, *they would have believed him, for* Moſes *wrote of him.* If Men did ſeriouſly believe ſuch an excellent Reward, as the Goſpel propounds, would it be a cold unperſwaſive Motive to them? The depravation of the Will argues a correſpondent defect in the Mind; though not abſolute total Infidelity, yet ſuch a weakneſs and wavering in the Aſſent, that when Temptations are preſent and urgent, and it comes to actual Choice, Senſe prevails over Faith. This will be clear by Univerſal Experience in temporal Things. The probable hope of Gain, will make thoſe who are greedy of Gold, prodigal of their Lives, and venture through tempeſtuous Seas to accompliſh their Deſires. And if the belief

belief were equal, would not Men do or ſuffer as much for obtaining what is infinitely more valuable? A firm Aſſent would produce adherence, and Faith in the Promiſes, Fidelity in obeying the Commands of Chriſt. *Tertullian* propounds it as a powerful incentive to the Martyrs, *Quis ergo non libentiſſimè tantum pro vero habeat erogare, quantum alii pro falſo?* Who would not joyfully ſacrifice Life and all its Indearments, to obtain true Bleſſedneſs, which others do for the vain Appearance of it? Men may be as truly Subjects without ſubjection, as Believers without a Heavenly Converſation, which is inſeparable from the Reality of Faith. Many in the Boſom of the Church are as truly, though not ſo notoriouſly, Infidels, as Turks and Heathens. Indeed even in true Believers the apprehenſion of eternal Things has ſuch great allays, that temporal Things are overvalued and over-feared. A ſtrong Faith in the Truth and Power of God, would make the glorious World ſo ſure and near in our Thoughts, that with indifferent Affections we ſhould receive good or evil Things here, *Rejoice as if*

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we rejoiced not, and mourn as if we mourned not. Our Lives would be ſo regular and pure, as if the Judg were to come the next Hour, as if the Sun did now begin to be darkned, and the Trumpet of the Arch-Angel were ſounding, and the noiſe of the diſſolving World were univerſally heard. Infidelity deads the Impreſſion, and ſuppreſſes the reigning Power of Eternal Things in our Hearts. In ſhort, Men are heavenly or earthly in their Choice and Converſation, as they are directed by the ſincere Light of Faith, or miſled by the falſe Beams of Senſe.

Secondly, The ſecond Thing requiſite in order to a wiſe Choice, is Conſideration. For as by Faith the Vertue of the Reward is diffuſed through all the Faculties, and the Powers of the World to come are felt in the Soul; ſo, by conſideration, Faith is exerciſed and becomes effectual. This unites and reinforces the Beams of Eternal Truth, and inflames the Affections. As the Pſalmiſt expreſſes himſelf, *My Heart was hot within me while I was muſing, the Fire burned.* Heaven is a Felicity ſo glorious

glorious and attractive, that if duly conſidered, no Man can poſſibly refuſe it: and Hell is a Miſery ſo extream and fearful, that if ſeriouſly laid to Heart, none can poſſibly chuſe it. The laſt End is to be conceived under the Notion of an infinite Good, without the leaſt mixture of Evil, to which the humane Will ſwayed by the invincible Impreſſion of Nature, has a tendency. The Liberty of Indifference is with reſpect to ſome particular good Things, which may be variouſly repreſented, ſo as to cauſe Inclination or Averſion. Thoſe Men who believe Eternal Life is the Reward of Holineſs, yet with a careleſs Inadvertency paſs over their Duty; and that Eternal Death is the Wages of Sin, yet ſecurely continue in it, is more wonderful than to ſee Martyrs ſing in the Flames; and the great Cauſe of it is the neglect of Conſideration. This is aſſigned to be the Cauſe of that unnatural and aſtoniſhing Rebellion of *Iſrael* againſt God their Father and Sovereign: *Hear, O Heavens, and give Ear, O Earth: for the Lord hath ſpoken, I have nouriſhed and brought up Children, and they have rebelled*

Iſa. 1. 2, 3.

led againſt me. The Ox knows his Owner, and the Aſs his Maſter's Crib: but Iſrael *doth not know, my People doth not conſider.*

This Duty as it is of admirable Advantage, ſo 'tis univerſally neceſſary; for all are equally concern'd, and it is within the Power of all to perform. Though Men cannot convert themſelves, yet they may conſider what is preparatory to Converſion. For the Will may turn the Thoughts of the Mind to any ſort of Objects.

I will briefly ſhew the Nature of this Duty, and how to manage it for ſpiritual Profit, and thoſe Objects from whence our Thoughts derive vigour for the ſwaying of the Will and the Conduct of the Life.

1. The Nature of Conſideration is diſcovered by its End, which is this; That the Mind being ſatisfied in the juſt Reaſons upon which the Choice of Heaven is to be made, the Will and Affections may be engaged in an earneſt joyful and conſtant purſuit of it. And in this reſpect it differs from ſimple Knowledg, and naked Speculation, that informs the Mind without Influence

ence and Efficacy upon the Heart: Like a Garland of Flowers that adorns the Head without any benefit and refreſhing to him that wears it. And practical Meditation differs from the ſtudy of Divine Things in order to the inſtructing of others. That is like a Merchant's buying of Wine for Sale, this like providing it for our own uſe.

2. That the Conſideration of Eternal Things may be effectual, it muſt be,

1. Serious and deliberate. For the Affair is great in reality above all poſſible Conception or Compariſon. All other things, how conſiderable ſoever in themſelves, yet reſpectively and in parallel with this, are of no account. Our Saviour told *Martha*, *One thing is neceſſary*: Mary *hath choſen the better part, that ſhall not be taken from her.* What Inſtance can be of equal moment with that of entertaining the Son of God? Yet a ſerious attention to the Words of Eternal Life dropping from his Lips, was more neceſſary than making proviſion for him. The greateſt and moſt weighty Affairs in the World are but a vain

vain Employment, but Irregularity and Impertinence, in compare with Eternal Salvation. And the greateſt ſolemnity of Thoughts is requiſite, to undeceive the Mind, and ingage the Will for Heaven. 'Tis very obſervable that Errors in Judgment and Choice ſpring from the ſame Cauſes, the not ſincere and due weighing of Things. In the deciſions of Queſtions, Truth is diſcovered by comparing, with an equal ſtaid Attention, the Reaſons of the one and the other part: But when ſome vicious Affection contradicts the Truth, it fills the Mind with Prejudices, that it cannot impartially ſearch into Things, and is deceived with ſpecious Fallacies, with the Image of Truth. For according to the preſent application of the Mind 'tis determined, and Paſſion ſtrongly applies it to conſider that which is for the Carnal Intereſt, and conſequently Inclination, not Reaſon, is the Principle of the Perſwaſion. And this is more evident in Mens fooliſh Choice: As the Eye cannot ſee but what is viſible, nor the Underſtanding conceive what is not Intelligible, the Will cannot love and chuſe what is not amiable,

amiable, at leaſt in ſhew. If the Devil did appear without a Diſguiſe, he would have no Power to perſwade, but in all his Temptations there is the mixture of a Lie to make it pleaſant. He preſents a falſe Perſpective, to make what is but ſuperficial appear ſolid and ſubſtantial. And the carnal Heart turns the Thoughts to what is grateful, without ſeriouſly conſidering what is infinitely better, and accordingly chuſes by the Eye of Senſe, the happineſs of this World. Therefore till Eternal Things are open'd in the view of Conſcience, and the Mind calmly conſiders by the Light of Faith their Reality and Greatneſs, no right valuation, nor wiſe choice can be made.

Beſides, the moſt clear and rational enforcements by the actings of the Thoughts, are neceſſary to make a ſtrong impreſſion on the Affections, and reſcue them from the captivity of the Fleſh. In other things as ſoon as the Mind is inlightned, the Will reſolves, and the inferior Faculties obey; but ſuch is the reſiſtance of the carnal Heart, that altho 'tis evident from infallible Principles there is an everlaſting Glory, infinitely to be

be preferr'd above the little appearances of Beauty and Pleaſure here, yet the moſt piercing Reaſons enter heavily without earneſt inculcation. Slight or ſudden Thoughts may produce vaniſhing Affections of complacence, or diſtaſte, and fickle Reſolutions, that like ſick Feathers drop away, and leave the Soul naked to the next Temptation; but ſolemn and fixed Thoughts are powerful on the Heart, in making a thorow and laſting Change. When the Clouds diſſolve in a gentle Shower, the Earth drinks in all, and is made Fruitful; but a few ſprinkling Drops, or a ſhort ſtorm of Rain, that wets only the Surface, without ſinking to the Root, is little beneficial. In ſhort, there may be ſome excitations to Good, and retractions from Evil, ſome imperfect faint eſſays towards Heaven, from an impulſe on the Mind; but ſolid Converſion is produc'd by deliberate Diſcourſe, by the due conſideration and eſtimation of things, 'tis rational and perpetual.

2. Conſideration muſt be frequent, to keep eternal Objects preſent, and powerful upon us. Such is the natural

Levity and Inconſtancy, Sloth and Carnality of the Mind, That the Notions of Heavenly Things quickly paſs through, but of Earthly abide there. If a Stone be thrown upwards, it remains no longer in the Air, than the impreſſion of the force by which it was thrown continues; but if it falls on the Earth, it reſts there by Nature. When the Soul is raiſed in contemplation to Heaven, how apt is it to fall from that height, and loſe the eſteem, the lively Remembrance and Affections of Eternal Things? But when the Thoughts are excited by the preſence of what is pleaſing to Senſe, the withdrawing the Object does not deface the Idea of it in the Memory, nor leſſen the Conceit, nor cool the Deſires of it, becauſe the Heart is naturally inclined to it. Therefore 'tis neceſſary every day to refreſh and renew the conceptions of eternal Things, that although they are not always in act, yet the efficacy may be always felt in the Heart and Life. The Soul habituated to ſuch Thoughts will not eaſily yield to Temptations, that ſurpriſe and overcome others that are Strangers in their Minds to the other World: Nay the preſence of Temptations,

tions, as by *Antiperiſtaſis*, will reinforce the Reſolutions for Heaven; like the pouring Water upon Lime, that revives a hidden Fire in it, which ſeems a natural Miracle. 'Tis therefore of great advantage frequently to ſequeſter our ſelves from the World, to redeem Time from ſecular Affairs, for the recollecting of our Thoughts and their ſolemn exerciſe upon the Eternal World. Senſe that reveals natural things, darkens ſpiritual. How can the Thoughts be fixt on inviſible things ſo diſtant from Senſe, if always converſant with ſecular Objects that draw them down? In the ſilence of the Night a ſmall Voice is more diſtinctly heard, and a little diſtant Light more clearly ſeen: ſo when the Soul is withdrawn from the noiſy throng of the World, and outward things are darkned, the Voice of Conſcience is better heard, and the Light of Heaven more perfectly received.

3. Conſideration of Eternal Things muſt be with preſent Application to the Soul. 'Tis not the meer conviction of the Mind, but the decree of the Will that turns Men from Sin to Holineſs, from the Creatures to God. The Heart is very deceitful, and by variety of

ſhifts and palliations is diſpoſed to irreſolutions and delays in ſpiritual Concernments. How often does the miſerable Sinner contend with himſelf, and while Conſcience urges him to ſeek the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Affections draw down to the Earth, the carnal part prevailing over the rational, he overcomes, and is overcome, he is convinced and condemned by his own Mind. Till Conſideration iſſues in this, that with ſetled Judgment and Affections the Soul determines for God and Heaven, 'tis without profit. Therefore in the managing this Duty, 'tis our Wiſdom not to be curious and inquiſitive after ſubtile Conceptions, and exalted Notions of the future State, that little confer to the making the Heart better, but to think ſeriouſly on what is plain and evident, and moſt uſeful to produce a preſent laſting Change. It were egregious Folly in a Man, that for the uſe of his Garden, ſhould with great labour fetch Water from diſtant Fountains, and neglect that which ſprings up in his own Ground. That Meditation is profitable which produces not new Thoughts, but holy and firm reſolutions of obeying God in order to the full en-

enjoying of him for ever.

To perſwade us to the ſerious practice of this Duty, there are many Enforcements.

Is any Man ſo fooliſh, ſo regardleſs of his Convenience, to purchaſe a Houſe wherein he muſt live all his Days, and will not firſt ſee whether it will be convenient, and ſecure for his Habitation? Shall we not then conſider Heaven the Manſion of Bleſſedneſs, and Hell the Seat of Miſery and Horror? for according as we chuſe here, we ſhall be in the one or other place for ever. I ſhall in the fourth part of this Treatiſe, endeavour to repreſent ſomething of the inexpreſſible Miſery of the Wicked hereafter, and ſhew how congruous and powerful the Thoughts of it are to reſtrain Men from Sin; but at preſent ſhall briefly excite to the Meditation of the Heavenly Glory, as the moſt noble, delightful and fruitful Work of the Soul, whiles confin'd to the Body of Fleſh. 'Tis the moſt exalted Exerciſe of the Mind, the pureſt converſe with God, the Flower of conſecrated Reaſon. 'Tis moſt like the Life of glorified Spirits above, who are in continual contemplation of the Di-

vine Excellencies, and 'tis moſt raiſed above the Life of Carnal Men, that are ſunk into Senſuality and Brutiſhneſs. 'Tis the moſt joyful Life, in that it ſheds abroad in the Soul Delights that neither ſatiate, nor corrupt, nor weaken the Faculties, as the Delights of Senſe do, but afford Perfection as well as Pleaſure. 'Tis the moſt profitable Life. As in thoſe parts of the Earth where the Beams of the Sun are ſtrongly reflected, precious Metals and Jewels are produc'd, wherein the refulgent reſemblance of that bright Planet appears: ſo the lively and vigorous Exerciſe of the Thoughts upon the heavenly Glory, will produce heavenly Affections, heavenly Diſcourſes, and a heavenly ſhining Converſation. This will make us live like the bleſſed Society above, imitating their Innocence and Purity, their joyful, entire and conſtant Obedience to God. This confirms the Holy Soul in its Choice, with an invincible efficacy againſt the Temptations and Luſts of the World. The ſerious conſidering Believer is filled with raviſhing Wonder of the Glory that ſhall be revealed, and looks down with Contempt upon the Earth, and all that has the Name of Felicity

licity here. All the Invitations, nay Terrors of the World, are as unable to check his purſuit of his bleſſed End, as the Breath of an Infant to ſtop the high flight of an Eagle.

But how rare and diſuſed a Duty is this? How hardly are Men induc'd to ſet about it? Buſineſs and Pleaſures are powerful Diverſions. Some pretend Buſineſs as a juſt Cauſe, but in vain; *for the one Thing neceſſary* challenges our principal Thoughts and Care. Beſides, there are intervals of Leiſure, and the Thoughts are always ſtreaming, and often run waſte, which directed aright, would be very fruitful to the Soul. The true Cauſe of this neglect is from the inward temper of Men. Carnal Pleaſures alienate the Mind, and make it unfit for the deep ſerious actings of the Thoughts upon Eternal Things. *I have ſaid of Laughter, Thou art mad*; it makes the Mind light, and vain, and deſultory. As a diſtracted Perſon by every motion of Fancy flies from one thing to another without Coherence. The Heart fill'd with cloudy Cares, and ſmoaky Fires, with Thoughts and Deſires about worldly Things, is unprepar'd for

ſuch a clear, calm, and ſedate Work. A Carnal Perſon can taſte no ſweetneſs, feel no reliſh in the Meditation of Heaven, nor any Spiritual Duty. 'Tis as if one ſhould take ſome delicious Fruit into his Mouth, a Peach, or the like, without breaking the Skin; it would be rather a trouble, than pleaſant. Nay, the Goſpel expreſly declaring, *That without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee God*; thoſe who by vicious Affections are ingaged in any ſinful way, being conſcious of their Guilt and unpreparedneſs, and that while ſuch, they are under a peremptory excluſion from celeſtial Glory, cannot endure the thoughts of Heaven. The Divine Preſence is their Torment, and the ſerious conſideration of it, is to bring them before God's holy and juſt Tribunal, to accuſe and condemn them.

I ſhall now take a particular view of thoſe Objects, from whence Conſideration derives Vigour, for the inclining of the Will to a right Choice, and for regulating the Life.

1. Conſider the End for which Man was deſigned in his Creation, why endued with rational and noble Powers of

of Soul, and plac'd by the Soveraign Maker in the higheſt rank of ſo numerous and various Natures that fill the Univerſe. Is it to raiſe an Eſtate, to ſhine in Pomp, to enjoy ſenſual Pleaſures for a little while, and after the fatal term to be no more for ever? Was he ſent into the World upon as mean a Buſineſs as that of the fooliſh Emperor, who employed an Army, furniſh'd with all Military Preparations, to gather Shells upon the Sea-ſhore? This were, according to the paſſionate expoſtulation of the Pſalmiſt, to charge God *that he had made all Men in vain.* Reaſon and Scripture tells us the End of Man is to glorify and enjoy God, the obtaining whereof makes him perfectly happy, and the miſſing of it perfectly miſerable. This is a fundamental Truth, upon which the whole Fabrick of Man's Duty and Felicity is built. Without this Foundation, our Faith preſently ſinks. If the clearneſs of this principle be obſcur'd, we ſhall wander from the way of Eternal Life, and not only loſe the way, but the remembrance and deſire of it. Thinking is the property of the reaſo-

reaſonable Soul, and the juſt order of Conſideration is, that the Mind primarily regards this ſupream directive Truth that is to govern all our Actions. 'Twas prudent Counſel that * one of the Antients gave for compoſing a Book, that the Author frequently reflect upon the Title, that it may correſpond in all the parts with his original Deſign. Thus it becomes a Man often to conſider the End of his Being, that the courſe of his Life may have a direct tendency to it; and the more excellent our End is, the more conſtraining is the neceſſity to proſecute it. 'Tis of great Efficacy to reflect upon our ſelves, Whither do my Thoughts and Deſires tend? For what do I ſpend my Strength, and conſume my Days? Will it be my laſt Account, how much by my Prudence and Diligence I have exceeded others in temporal Acquiſitions? If a General were at play while the Armies are engaging, would it be a noble Exploit for him to win the Game, whiles his Army for want of conduct loſes the Victory? Will it be profitable for a Man to gain the World, and loſe his Soul? Let Conſcience anſwer in Truth.

* Primum ego ſcriptoris officium exiſtimo, ut titulum ſuum legat, atque identidem interrogat ſe, quid cæperit ſcribere.

'Tis

'Tis obſervable what is reported of a † noble Forreigner, that on his Birth-day, reflecting upon the Age of his Life, he was ſurpriz'd with grief, and ſtruck with Aſtoniſhment, that without a due Senſe of the proper Buſineſs and End of Life, he was arrived to that Age, when our Days begin to decline. In an inſtant all things ſeem'd to change appearance in his view. Then firſt (ſays he) I perceived I was a Man, for before I had not reſolved for what I ſhould employ my Life. The iſſue was, his ſerious Reſolution unfeignedly to honour God, ſincerely to confeſs Chriſt, to place his Felicity in Holineſs of Life, and moſt zealouſly to follow it. Let any one that is not of a reprobate Mind, and an incorrigibly depraved Heart, duly conſider the ſublime and ſupernatural End of Man. O what a marvellous change will it make in him, of Carnal into Spiritual? nay it would be a kind of Miracle if he continued in his ſinful State. How will it transform him into another Man, with new Valuations, new Affections and Reſolutions, as if he were *born again* with a new Soul? How will it amaze him that his whole courſe has been a contradiction to the wiſe

† Cum natalis dies Februarii admonuiſſet ætatis numerandæ, & triceſimo reperiſſem, invaſit me ſubita mœſtitia, & perculſit admirantem, quomodo ſine ſenſu vitæ ad ejus culmen perveniſſem, à quo lux quælibet fit obſcurior, & dies noſtri ad occaſum inclinare incipiunt. Viſa eſt mihi rerum facies momento mutata, & tunc primum me hominem agnovi. *Mémoires Chanut.*

wiſe and gracious deſign of God, that all his Induſtry has been a race out of the way, a perpetual diverſion from his main Buſineſs, that his Life has been fruitleſs and dead to the true End of it? How will he be confounded at his former Folly? Then alone we act with Underſtanding, when mov'd by our bleſſed End, and our Actions by a ſtrict tendency without variation iſſue into it.

2. Conſider attentively the Objects that ſtand in competition for our Choice, the preſent World and Heaven, to make a judicious compariſon between them in their Quality and Duration.

Firſt, in their Quality. The things of the World, according to the judgment of God himſelf, who is only Wiſe and Good, and has the higheſt Authority to decide in the caſe, are but fallacious appearances of Happineſs, meer Vanity. And certainly the Creator knows the true worth of all things, and would not diſparage his own Works, but would undeceive Men that are apt to judge and chooſe by the Eye of Senſe. The Apoſtle tells us, *That an Idol is nothing in the World*; although the matter of it may be of Gold, or Marble, or

or Wood, yet it has no divine Perfection, which the Idolater attributes to it. So all worldly things, in which Men place their chief Care, and Confidence, and Joy, though they have ſome degrees of Goodneſs, and are a tranſient relief to us in our paſſage to Eternity, yet they are nothing as to perfect Felicity. 'Tis meerly Opinion and Conceit that makes them ſo valued and pleaſing, like a rich Dye to a ſlight Stuff from whence its Price ariſes. Reaſon is either obſcur'd, or not obeyed, when the World is the Object of our Choice. Now what are theſe Appearances of Beauty and Pleaſure, compar'd with a Bleſſedneſs that is truly infinite? Carnal Joy ſmiles in the Countenance, flatters the Fancy, touches the Senſe, but cannot fill the Heart, but the Favour of God ſatisfies the Soul. *Thou haſt put Gladneſs into my Heart, more than when their Corn and Wine increaſed.* Carnal Joy in its higheſt elevation in the time of the Harveſt and Vintage, is incomparably leſs than Spiritual Joy that ſprings from the Light of God's Countenance. The World cannot fill the narrow capacity of our Senſes, but divine Joys exceed our moſt inlarged comprehenſive

henſive Faculties. *The Eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the Ear with hearing; but the Peace of God paſſes all Underſtanding.* The Things of the World are of a limited Goodneſs; Wiſdom is not Strength, nor Learning Riches, nor Beauty Fruitfulneſs: But God is a *Univerſal Good*, in whom are all Attractives to raiſe and ſatisfy our Deſires. If Men did conſider, they would diſtinguiſh and deſpiſe in compariſon all that is named Felicity here, with the Favour of God. To ſeek for ſatisfaction in the Creature and forſake him, is as if one deſirous to ſee the Light ſhould withdraw from the preſence of the Sun, to borrow it from a weak Ray reflected by ſome obſcure Matter. Now if there be ſo vaſt a difference in their Nature, as between a painted Vapour, and the ſolid glorious Good, between Finite and Infinite, why is there not a difference accordingly in our Eſteem, Affections and Reſpects to them? How unreaſonable is it that a Soul capable of God, ſhould cleave to the Duſt? It would be moſt egregious folly to hang a Weight, that is able to turn a great Engine, upon a ſmall Clock: 'tis incomparably more fooliſh, when the love of Happineſs, the

the weight of Humane Nature, which applied aright, will turn our Deſires to Heaven, is only uſed to give vigorous motion to our Endeavours about earthly Things.

2. Conſider their Duration. The Apoſtle tells us, that the main *ſcope of his Actions was Things inviſible*; and gives the reaſon of it, *For the things that are ſeen are Temporal; but the things that are not ſeen are Eternal.* To inſiſt upon the vaſt difference between Temporal and Eternal, may ſeem needleſs: for the firſt Notions of things are of ſuch uncontroulable clearneſs, that an attempt to prove them, is to light a Candle to diſcover the Sun. Yet this Principle drawing after it ſuch powerful Conſequences for the government of our Hearts and Lives, and Conſcience being ſo remiſs, and the ſenſual Affections ſo rebellious, 'tis needful to conſider this ſeriouſly, that what is really aſſented to in Speculation, may not be contradicted in Practice. Now who can unfold the infinite Volume of Ages in Eternity? The Underſtanding of an Angel can no more comprehend what is incomprehenſible than the Mind of 2 Cor. 4. 18.

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a Man. A Snail will paſs over an immenſe ſpace as ſoon as an Eagle: for though one diſpatches more way than the other, yet both are equally diſtant from arriving to the end of what is endleſs. But that the Conception of Eternity may be more diſtinct, and affecting, it is uſeful to repreſent it under ſome temporal Reſemblances, that ſenſibly, though not fully, expreſs it. Suppoſe that the vaſt Ocean were diſtilled drop by drop, but ſo ſlowly, that a thouſand Years ſhould paſs between every drop; how many millions of Years were required to empty it? Suppoſe this great World in its full compaſs, from one Pole to another, and from the top of the Firmament to the bottom, were to be fill'd with the ſmalleſt Sand, but ſo ſlowly, that every thouſand Years only a ſingle Grain ſhould be added; how many Millions would paſs away before it were filled? If the immenſe Superficies of the Heavens, wherein are innumerable Stars, the leaſt of which equals the magnitude of the Earth, were filled with Figures of Numbers without the leaſt vacant ſpace, and every Figure ſignified a Million, what created Mind could tell their Number,

Number, much leſs their Value? Having theſe Thoughts, I reply; The Sea will be emptied drop by drop, the Univerſe fill'd grain by grain, the Numbers written in the Heavens will come to an end; and how much of Eternity is then ſpent? Nothing; for ſtill infinitely more remains. In ſhort, what-ever is Temporal, extend the continuance of it to the utmoſt poſſibility of Conception, is infinitely ſhort of Eternity. A Day, an Hour, a Minute, has ſome proportion with a thouſand Years; for that duration is determined by a certain number of Days, and Hours, and Minutes: but Millions of Ages have no proportion to Eternity, becauſe 'tis an indeterminable Duration. The Mind is ſoon tir'd and loſt in ſearching after Numbers to repreſent it: 'tis confounded and ſtruck with amazing Horror, and can only direct the Eye upward or downward to the two Habitations of Eternity, the glorious and the miſerable, Heaven and Hell. Now let us compare the Things of the preſent World with thoſe of the future State. The firſt are meaſur'd by flying Time, the other remain in an unmoveable Eternity. The Comforts that ſpring from the Earth, ſuddenly wither and

fall to it: the Tree of Life flouriſhes only above. Frequent changes from Proſperity to Adverſity are the Properties of this mortal State. As thoſe who are in Voyages at Sea, ſometimes are in a calm, and preſently ſuffer a ſtorm, and are forc'd to alter their Courſe by the changing of the Winds; ſo 'tis with us in our paſſage here. But upon the firſt entrance into another World, all the variations of this are at an end. *Verily every Man at his beſt eſtate is altogether Vanity. Surely every Man walks in a vain ſhew, ſurely they are diſquieted in vain.* The viſible Felicity of Man is of no continuance. We may frequently obſerve in the Evening, a Cloud by the reflection of the Sun inveſted with ſo bright a Luſtre, and adorn'd with ſuch a pleaſant variety of Colours, that in the judgment of our Eyes, if an Angel were to aſſume a Body correſpondent to his Glory, it were a fit matter for it. But in walking a few ſteps, the Sun is deſcended beneath the Horizon, and the Light withdrawn, and of all that ſplendid flaming appearance, nothing remains but a dark Vapour, that falls down in a Showre. Thus vaniſhing is the ſhew of Felicity here. In this, Senſe aſſiſts Faith; for the experience of every

ry day verifies what the Scripture declares, *that the Faſhion of this World paſſes away.* And therefore the guilty Folly of Men is aggravated, *to ſet their Eyes and Hearts upon that which is not.* To ſee one paſſionately dote on a Face ruin'd and deform'd with Age, to be inchanted without a Charm, raiſes wonder, and expoſes to contempt. Yet ſuch is the ſtupidity of Men to embrace with their moſt entire Affections the wither'd Vanities of the World, that are haſtening to their Period. 'Twas a ſtinging reproach to Idolaters from God, *None conſiders in his Heart, neither is their Knowledg nor Underſtanding*, to ſay, *I have burnt part of it in the Fire; yea, I have alſo baked Bread upon the Coals thereof; I have roaſted Fleſh and eaten it; and ſhall I make the reſidue an Abomination? ſhall I fall down to the ſtock of a Tree?* And are not ſenſual Men equally guilty of ſuch monſtrous Folly? for though univerſal Experience convince them, that all things under the Sun are fading, and that many times their deareſt Comforts are ſnatch'd away from their Embraces; yet who does adviſedly conſider, and ſay to himſelf, Shall I give my Heart to tranſient Shadows? Shall I cheriſh vain Hopes, vain Aims and De-

ſires of obtaining Happineſs in a periſhing World? Altho the worſhipping a Stock be Idolatry of groſſer Infamy, yet 'tis as fooliſh and as deſtructive to ſet our chief Love and Joy, that is only due to God, upon the Creature. And what follows in the Prophet is juſtly applicable to ſuch Perſons; *He feedeth on Aſhes*, (that not only afford no nouriſhment, but is very hurtful to the Body) *a deceived Heart has turn'd him aſide, that he cannot deliver his Soul, nor ſay, Is there not a Lie in my right Hand?* Thus Carnal Men are ſo blinded with their Affections to theſe ſhort-liv'd Pleaſures, that they cannot take the true liberty of judging and reflecting that they are deceived and delighted with empty Shadows that will ſuddenly end in diſappointment and ſorrow? Briefly, theſe glittering Fictions and falſe Joys cannot pleaſe without an Error in the Mind, that ſhall laſt but a little while. And if you ſaw a diſtracted Perſon ſing and dance, with a conceit that he is a Prince, would you be willing to loſe ſober Reaſon for his phantaſtick Pleaſure, eſpecially if you knew that his chearful Fit ſhould ſuddenly change into a mournful or raging Madneſs for ever? But the Bleſſedneſs above is unchange-

able

able as God the Author and Object of it, Eternal as the Soul that enjoys it. And ſhall the *World that paſſes away with the Luſts thereof, turn our Affections from the undefiled immortal Inheritance?* Shall the vaniſhing appearance, the fleeting Figure of Happineſs be preferred before what is ſubſtantial and durable? If a ſpark of true Reaſon, of ſincere Love to our Souls be left, *we ſhall count all things but droſs and dung, that we may gain the Kingdom of Glory.* Thus Eternity inlightens, thus it counſels us.

To encourage us to ſeek the Kingdom of Heaven, I ſhall propound other Motives to Conſideration.

1. God is very willing that Men ſhould be ſaved and partake of his Glory. For this end, *he has brought Life and Immortality to light in the Goſpel.* The Lord Jeſus, the Sun of Righteouſneſs, has diſpel'd the darkneſs of the Gentiles, and the ſhadows of the Jews, and rendred the bleſſed and eternal State ſo clear and ſo viſible, that every Eye may ſee it. Our aſſurance of it is upon infallible Principles. And though the excellent Glory of it is inexpreſſible, yet 'tis repreſented under variety

of fair and lovely Types to invite our Affections. Beſides, God makes an earneſt offer of Life to us in his Word, he Commands, Counſels, Excites, Urges, nay Intreats and Beſeeches with infinite Tenderneſs, that Men will accept of it. Thus the Apoſtle declares, *Now then we are Embaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us, we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead be reconciled to God.* Is it not evident then beyond the moſt jealous ſuſpicion, God is deſirous of our Happineſs? Can we imagine any deſign, any inſincerity in his Words? Why ſhould Heaven court a Worm? 'Tis his love to Souls that expreſſes it ſelf in that condeſcending compaſſionate manner, to melt and overcome the perverſe and hardned in Sin.

And as his Words ſo his Works are a convincing Argument of his Will: His moſt gracious ſuſtaining and ſupporting of ſinful Men, his innumerable Benefits conferr'd upon them, in the proviſion of Good, and preſervation from Evil, are for this End, that by the conduct of his merciful Providence they may be led to Repentance, and received into his Favour. And the temporal Judgments inflicted on Sinners, are medicinal in their Nature, and in his deſign

deſign to bring them to a ſight and abhorrence of Sin, to prevent their final ruin: if they prove mortal to any, 'tis from their obſtinate Corruption. The time allowed to thoſe who are obnoxious to his Juſtice every hour, is not a meer reprieve from Torment, but a ſpace of Repentance to ſue out a Pardon: They are ſpared in order to Salvation. *The Lord is long-ſuffering to usward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance.* 2 Pet. 3. 9.

But above all his other Works, the giving of his Son to be a Sacrifice for Sin, is an incomparable demonſtration, how much he delights in the Salvation of Men. Since God has been at ſuch coſt to put them into a capacity of obtaining the Kingdom of unchangeable Glory, far tranſcending the earthly Paradiſe that was forfeited by Sin, we have the ſtrongeſt aſſurance that he deſires their Felicity. And how guilty and miſerable will thoſe Sinners be that when Chriſt has opened Heaven to us by his Blood, refuſe to enter into it? When *Brutus* the moſt noble Roman, propounded to a Philoſopher his deſign to reſtore *Rome* to Liberty, he

replied, That the action would be glorious indeed, but that ſo many ſervile Spirits that tamely ſtoopt under Tyranny, were not worthy that a Man of Vertue and Courage ſhould hazard himſelf to recover that for them, which they did ſo lightly eſteem. The Redemption of Mankind is without controverſy the Maſter-piece of God's works, wherein his principal Attributes appear in their excellent Glory. But how aſtoniſhing is the unworthineſs of Men, who wretchedly neglect Salvation, which the Son of God purchaſed by a Life full of Sorrows, and a Death of infinite Sufferings? Bleſſed Redeemer! may it be ſpoken with the humble, affectionate, and thankful ſenſe of thy dying Love, why didſt thou give thy ſelf a ranſom for thoſe who are charm'd with their Miſery, and with the moſt foul Ingratitude diſvalue ſo precious a Redemption? How juſtly ſhall they be for ever deprived of it? *Behold, ye deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh.*

2. Conſider, this glorious Bleſſedneſs ſhall be the Portion of all that unfeignedly chooſe it, and earneſtly ſeek it. This motive was incloſed in the firſt, but deſerves a ſeparate Conſideration.

And

And of this we have infallible aſſurance from the Word of God, *who cannot lie. Godlineſs has the Promiſe of the Life to come. This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation.* The hope of a Chriſtian is ſo certain that 'tis compar'd to *an Anchor faſtned in Heaven.* And beſides the Fidelity of his Word, God has given us Security of the Reward, the Life of his Son. This methinks ſhould turn the Current of our Deſires and Endeavours to Heaven. For notwithſtanding all our toil and ſweat, the labour of the Day and the watchings of the Night for the obtaining earthly things, yet we many times fall ſhort of our aims and hopes. 'Twas the obſervation of the wiſeſt Man, *I returned and ſaw under the Sun, that the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battel to the Strong, neither yet Bread to the Wiſe, nor yet Riches to Men of Underſtanding, nor yet Favour to Men of Skill; but Time and Chance happeneth to all.* Indeed ſuch is the order of Divine Providence in the World, there muſt be different conditions of Men here, ſome Rich, others Poor; ſome Noble, others Mean; ſome in Command, others in Subjection. And from hence it is alſo evident, that neither

neither Dignity nor Riches nor Pleaſures are the Happineſs of Man. For 'tis not becoming the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God to make that the laſt end of the reaſonable Creature, which though ſought with Sincerity and Diligence, may not be obtained, or of which without his own conſent he may be deprived. But civil diſtinctions and qualities are of no value and conſideration with reſpect to the obtaining or excluding from Heaven. The rich and honourable that are in an exalted State, have not a more eaſy aſcent and entrance into the Kingdom of God than thoſe who are in the loweſt degree. The Stars appear with the ſame bigneſs to him that ſtands in the deepeſt Valley as on the higheſt Hill. Is there any difference between the Souls of the rich and great in the World, and the Souls of the poor and deſpiſed? Are they not equally the Off-ſpring of God, and equally ranſomed by the moſt precious Blood of his Son? Are they not equally capable of Eternal Rewards? Are not the Promiſes of the heavenly Kingdom, equally addreſt to every one that has an immortal Soul, that is faithful to his Duty and Covenant with God? This

ſhould

ſhould inſpire all with flaming Deſires, and draw forth their utmoſt Induſtry, *and make them ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always to abound in the Work of the Lord, knowing our labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.*

I know the Carnal Will is impetuous and impatient of delay; and earneſt for what is preſent with the neglect of the future Glory. But the unreaſonableneſs of this is evident to all; for 'tis not a new and ſtrange thing to ſow in hopes of reaping a Harveſt, for Men to be induſtrious and active on Land and Sea for future Advantage. Nay, 'tis the conſtant practice of the World: The Merchant, the Husbandman, the Student, the Souldier, and every Man in the Circle of his Calling are viſible Inſtances of this; and tho many times the moſt flouriſhing Hopes are blaſted, they are not diſcouraged. And is it not a ſight full of wonder to obſerve Men chearful in Labours and Hardſhips in the Service of the World, to carry it ſo lightly as if they had Wings, and all for a poor and uncertain Recompence, and to be ſlow and languid in their Endeavours for a Reward as great and as ſure as God is glo-

rious

rious and true? How many ambitiouſly ſtrive to pleaſe a Prince, and wait long in his Service, who is but a Man, and therefore variable in his Temper and State, ſometimes is not willing to do what he can, and ſometimes cannot do what he would to reward his Servants? And is there not infinitely more reaſon we ſhould labour to pleaſe God, who is the moſt liberal, and rich, and *certain Rewarder of all that ſeek him?*

3. Conſider how gracious the Terms are upon which Heaven is promiſed in the Goſpel. Our Saviour's Laws are ſo holy, juſt, and in their own Nature ſo good to Men, even in their preſent performance, that their own Excellence, and Equity, and Sweetneſs, is ſufficient to recommend them without a reſpect to the glorious Reward of Obedience. For what can be more deſirable than conformity to the Nature of the bleſſed God? What Pleaſure is comparable to that which ſprings from a pure Conſcience, from a godly, righteous and ſober Converſation? How joyful is the performance of that Service which more immediately is directed to the honour of the Divine Majeſty? In Prayer, and other

other ſacred Actions, we draw near to the Fountain of Felicity, and receive from his Fulneſs. In the affectionate Praiſes of God, we are Companions of the Angels. And is not Integrity and Honeſty in our dealings with Men more eaſy and comfortable than Fraud and Oppreſſion? Is it not troubleſome to be always under a Mask, to uſe arts and diſguiſes to avoid the reproach and revenge that attends unjuſt Actions when diſcovered? Are Temperance and Chaſtity as hurtful to the Body, as Luxury and Laſciviouſneſs, the eſſential parts of Carnal Felicity? How miſerably diſtracted is Man when the Heart is rent with numberleſs Vanities, the Affections divided between various Objects! how quiet and compoſed, when the Heart is united to God as the ſupreme Good, and the Affections joyfully conſpire in his Service! Can it then be pretended that the Yoke of Chriſt is heavy, and his Law hard? Or are his Promiſes uncertain, and his Reward ſmall? No, *his Commands are not grievous; in the keeping them there is a great Reward*, a preſent Paradiſe. Religion will make us happy hereafter in the enjoyment of God, and happy here in Obedience to his

his Holy Will. Such is his Goodneſs, that our Duty and Happineſs are the ſame.

But it will be ſaid, That the Goſpel requires *us to pluck out the right Eye, and to cut off the right Hand, and to take up the Croſs of Chriſt*; *that is, to mortify the deareſt Luſts, and to ſubmit to the ſharpeſt Sufferings for his Honour, that we may be eternally Happy.*

To this I anſwer;

'Tis true, the humane Nature in this depraved State, only reliſhes ſuch Objects as pleaſantly inſinuate with the Carnal Senſes, and 'tis bitter as Death to bind up the Affections from them. But Grace gives a *new divine Nature to the Soul*, and makes it eaſy to abſtain from fleſhly Luſts. To make this more clear by a ſenſible Inſtance: Suppoſe a diſeaſed Perſon, whoſe Stomach is oppreſs'd with corrupt Humours, and his Throat and Mouth ſo heated with Choller and continual Thirſt, that he thinks it impoſſible, though for his Life, to abſtain from immoderate Drinking. If a Phyſician by ſome powerful Medicine cleanſes the Stomach, and tempers the internal Heat, he then can eaſily reſtrain himſelf from Exceſs.

Exceſs. Thus a Carnal Man that is full of falſe Eſtimations, and irregular Deſires, while there are Pleaſures without, and Paſſions unſubdued within, though his Salvation depends on it, thinks it impoſſible to reſtrain the exorbitant Appetites of Fleſh and Blood. The *Gentiles thought it ſtrange Chriſtians did not run with them to the ſame exceſs of Riot.* But divine Grace ſo clarifies and enlightens the Mind, ſo purifies and elevates the Affections, that 'tis not only poſſible but eaſy to abſtain from unlawful Pleaſures. St. *Auſtin* before his Converſion was aſtoniſh'd, that many in the vigour of Youth, and in a frail World lived Chaſtly; and reflecting upon himſelf, was encouraged by this Thought, that which ſuch and ſuch obſerve, why ſhall it be impoſſible to me to obſerve? and upon ſerious trial, by the proſperous influence of Heaven, was a Conqueror over all carnal Temptations. Nay after his holy Change, the withholding his Heart from vitious Delights, was inexpreſſibly more ſweet than his former enjoying of them. And are there not many viſible examples of holy heavenly Chriſtians, to whom groſſer ſenſual Plea-

Quam ſuave carete ſuavitatibus iſtis?

Pleaſures are unſavory and contemptible? You may as well tell the number of the Stars, as of thoſe who have practiſed Religion in its ſtrictneſs and purity, and by their enlightned Converſations directed us in the way to Heaven. And are their Bodies taken from the Vein of a Rock, and not compoſed of Fleſh and Blood as well as others? Are their Paſſions, like *Solomon*'s brazen Sea, unmoveable by any Winds of Temptations? Are they entirely exempted from the impreſſion of Objects, and the lower Affections? No, they are alive, and ſenſible of thoſe things that raviſh the Affections of carnal Men, but by the power of Grace deſpiſe and overcome them. And this Grace is offered in the Goſpel to all that ſincerely deſire it, ſo that 'tis a vain wretched pretence that Religion binds to hard Service.

To the other part of the Objection, that ſometimes Religion expoſes the Profeſſors of it to heavy Sufferings, I anſwer, Indeed the Goſpel is plain and peremptory in this, if we will *reign with Chriſt, we muſt ſuffer with him*, when we are called forth to give a noble teſtimony

ny to his Truth. 'Tis no extraordinary Elevation, no point of Perfection, but the duty of every Chriſtian to be always ready in the diſpoſition and reſolution of his Mind, to ſacrifice his Life when the honour of Chriſt requires it. But 'tis no hard condition to ſuffer tranſient Afflictions for the obtaining a Happy Immortality, to be conformable to the Image of our ſuffering Redeemer, that we may be crowned with his Glory. How many Chriſtians eſteemed themſelves honoured in the Diſgrace, and bleſſed in the Injuries they ſuffered for Chriſt, and with an invincible Patience, and aſtoniſhing Joy, endured the moſt cruel Perſecutions, though yet the human Nature in them was as tender and ſenſible of Pains as in others? but the natural averſion and repugnance to ſuffering was overruled by the determination of the rational Will, upon the account of their Duty, and the Reward attending it. They gave a moſt convincing ſenſible Teſtimony how much more valuable Heaven is, than this preſent World, willingly expoſing themſelves to all Evil here, *and rejoicing in hope* of a glorious iſſue.

In ſhort; the Reward of Obedience

is a triumphal Crown; and where there is no Victory, there can be no Triumph; and where no Combat, no Victory; and where no Enemy, no Combat. Therefore we are commanded to fight againſt our internal Enemies, our corrupt Affections, to kill the Luſts of the Fleſh, and to encounter and overcome, by Humility and meek Submiſſions, the Cruelty of malicious Enemies without us, in order to obtain the Crown of Life. And a Believer that has Heaven in taſte and expectation, will eaſily renounce the moſt pleaſant, and willingly endure the ſharpeſt Temptations, for the bleſſed Reward of his Obedience.

Laſtly, Fervent and conſtant Prayer is requiſite for the Grace of God, that we may fix our Aims aright upon eternal Happineſs, and uſe thoſe ſure Means that with divine Advantage are propos'd in the Scriptures, that can make us wiſe to Salvation; ſuch is the depravation of Man ſince his Fall, the Mind is diverted by vain Thoughts, and the Heart prepoſſeſs'd with ſenſual Deſires, that 'till *the Spirit of his Mind be renewed*, and his original Affections to the

the Supream Good be revived and reſtored by Divine Grace, he is regardleſs of it, and only applies himſelf to what is pleaſing to Senſe. There may be ſome tranſient Glances, and volatile Wiſhes of Heaven in Carnal Men, but they are miſerably weak, and ineffectual. Therefore a moſt neceſſary Duty incumbent upon us, is by humble and fervent Prayer to addreſs our ſelves to God for his Spirit, to enlighten our Minds, that we may believe the Reality and Greatneſs of the Eternal Reward; and to reform our Wills, that we may feel its attractive Force. Both theſe Acts of the Spirit are requiſite, that the Love of God, as our chief Felicity, may be the regent Principle of our Hearts and Lives.

1. For this end the Holy Spirit convinces Men thorowly of the Reality and Greatneſs of an inviſible Happineſs. In the Light of the Goſpel, how many of eminent intellectual Faculties are ſtupid as to their great Intereſt, and ſpend themſelves about Trifles, and are equally tractable to Eternal Ruin, as the Ox to the Slaughter? He that is deſtitute of the illuminating Grace of the Spirit, *is blind, and cannot ſee afar off.*

off. Now by the Analogy between the corporal and intellectual Faculties, we may underſtand, in ſome meaſure, how the Mind is illuminated by the Spirit of God. For as to the Act of Seeing, two things are requiſite; 1. External Light in the Air, without which the Colours, Figures and Beauties of Objects are not viſible to the ſharpeſt Eye, but lie obſcur'd under impenetrable Darkneſs. 2. Internal Light in the Eye, in which the viſive Power conſiſts: if this be extinguiſh'd, the cleareſt Light of Heaven is of no uſe for the diſcovery of Things. Thus the Underſtanding is enabled to ſee Spiritual things. 1. By the Revelation of the Object: In this reſpect *Life and Immortality are brought to Light by the Goſpel.* Till that bright Diſcovery was made of Eternal Bleſſedneſs, it was above the deſires and hopes of ſinful Man. *Cœlum, homo nec optare poterat ex ignorantia, nec ſperare ex propriæ miſeriæ conſcientia.* 2. By the inward inlightning *from the Spirit of Wiſdom,* that removes the Ignorance, Prejudice, and Inadvertency of the Mind, which as Scales darkned its Sight, and diſpoſes it to perceive the Verity and Excellency of ſpiritual and future

future Things, tho not with comprehenſive Evidence, yet with that aſſurance, that no doubtfulneſs or ſuſpence remains concerning them. 'Tis obſervable that Faith is expreſt in Scripture, by *Prudence, Wiſdom, and Knowledg*, whereby a Man knows the Grounds and Motives of his Judgment and Actions. And Sin is called *Folly*. For as when the underſtanding Faculty, either from the indiſpoſedneſs of the Organs, as in Idiots, or from the diſorder of Fancy by inflammation of the Humours, as in diſtracted Perſons, cannot weigh and compare, and therefore makes a perverſe judgment of things; ſo the carnal Mind, by not due meaſuring and pondering, judges falſly of ſpiritual Things. If ſomething no bigger than the Hand were put before the Eye, it would intercept the ſight of the Heavens; and he that not conſidering the Properties of things near and diſtant, ſhould conclude that Piece to be bigger than the Heavens, were juſtly reputed a Fool. And the folly of carnal Men is more groſs, who prefer things preſent to Senſe, before what is future and of everlaſting conſequence to the Soul. But there are ſome Actions, which if done by a Natural,

would be counted Folly, yet being done by those who in the reputation of the World are Wise, are esteemed Prudent, but they are the most deplorable Folly. Now as the restoring the *Læsum principium*, the broken Mind to its sound state, whereby 'tis able to consider, discern and conclude of things according to their Nature, such is the action of God's Spirit upon the corrupt Mind, clarifying and enlightning it, so that it receives full conviction by the clearest Marks of divine Authority shining in the Gospel, of the Truth of all the great and precious Promises therein contained, and causing it, by a steady application of the Thoughts, to see the vast difference between what is Temporal, and Eternal; how despicably light all the Vanities of this World are found, when put in the Ballance against the infinite inestimable Happiness of the next. In short, the renewed Mind knows Spiritual Things according to their Nature and Qualities, believes, esteems, and determines that they are of eternal Moment, and absolutely necessary for the Happiness of Man. And as when the natural Faculty of seeing is perish'd, 'tis irreparable by human Skill, and without a Miracle can never

never be reſtored; ſo the intellectual Faculty, when darkned by ſinful Luſts, without the renewing power of the Spirit, *can never know Spiritual Things as they ought to be known.* Therefore as the blind Men in the Goſpel who diſpair'd of help from the Phyſicians, hearing of the miraculous Power of Chriſt, importunately begg'd his healing Mercy; ſo let us pray to the Light and Saviour of the World, but in a more noble and higher Senſe, *Lord, that we may receive our ſight.* Let us with the moſt zealous Affections call upon *the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Glory, that he would give unto us the Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation in the knowledg of him, the Eyes of our underſtanding being inlightned, that we may know what is the hope of his Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints.*

2. The efficacious Influence of the Holy Spirit is requiſite to change the Will, that with a free and full conſent it may deſire and proſecute the Spiritual Eternal Good. Without this, the conviction of the Mind is not powerful enough to convert the Soul from the love of the World, to chooſe Heaven. There may be an inlightned Con-

ſcience, without a renewed Heart. Though the Judgment aſſents that God is the Supream Good, *yet till the Heart be circumciſed*, the ſenſuality of the Affections taken away, divine Love that directs the Life to God as our bleſſed End, can never poſſeſs it. Suppoſe that Men had a ſenſible and ſtrong aſſurance of the Eternal State hereafter, if all thoſe who lived godly in a viſible manner aſcended with *Elias* to Heaven, and if all who continued in their Sins viſibly deſcended into Hell, as *Corah* and his Company were ſwallowed up alive by the Earth, before the *Iſraelites*; if Men could hear the joyful Exultations of the Saints above, their high Praiſes of God, and hear the deſperate Crys and deep Complaints of the Damned: if one, according to the deſire of the rich Man, were ſent from Hell, and with his Fiery Tongue ſhould relate what he had ſeen and ſuffer'd, and exhibit a ſenſible demonſtration in himſelf of thoſe Torments, yet this alone were not ſufficient to draw off their Hearts from the deceitful Happineſs of this World, and faſten them on the perfect and Eternal Happineſs in the next. Indeed they could not then indulge

dulge their Luſts ſo ſecurely, but they *would be Strangers to the Life of God*, ſuch an inveterate alienation of Heart is in Men from real Holineſs. Till the ſanctifying Spirit by a directive perſuaſive Light that repreſents the Truth and Goodneſs of Spiritual Things, transforms the Soul, and makes it Spiritual in its Valuations and Affections, 'tis inwardly averſe from Grace and Glory. *The Lord direct our Hearts into the Love of God, and into the patient waiting for Chriſt, when he ſhall come to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe.*

FINIS.

OF

OF HELL.

BY

WILLIAM BATES, D.D.

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OF HELL.

Mark 9. 48. *Where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched.*

THE Words are the repetition of a powerful Motive, by our Bleſſed Saviour, to deter Men from indulging Temptations to ſin, how grateful or uſeful ſoever to them: *If thy Hand offend thee, cut it off; if thy Foot offend thee, cut it off; if thy Eye offend thee, pluck it out.* All the Occaſions whereby Sin inſinuates it ſelf, and inflames our Inclinations, whether it bribes us with Profit, or allures by Pleaſure, muſt be immediately cut off, and

and for ever ſeparated from us. This Counſel ſeems very ſevere to the natural Man, who freely converſes with Temptations: To do Violence to himſelf, and tear his beloved Luſts from his Boſom, the Carnal Nature will not conſent to. Our Saviour therefore urges ſuch Arguments as may move the Underſtanding and Affections, may ſtrike Senſe and Conſcience: *For it is better to enter into Life maimed, than having two Hands to go into Hell where the Fire never ſhall be quenched.* Hope and Fear are the moſt active Paſſions: The Hope of Heaven is motive enough to induce a true Believer to deſpiſe and reject all the Advantages and Pleaſures of Sin that are but for a Seaſon: and the fear of an Everlaſting Hell, is ſtrong enough to controul the vicious Appetites. Reaſon determines, that when a Gangreen that is deadly and ſpreading, has ſeiz'd upon a Member, preſently to cut off an affected Arm or Leg, to ſave the reſt: how much more reaſonable and neceſſary is it to part with the moſt charming and favourite Sin, to preſerve the Soul from Eternal Death? 'Tis obſervable, our Saviour inculcates three times, that

Ut corpus redimas ferrum patieris & ignes: ut valeas animo quicquam tolerare negabis? At pretium pars hæc corpore majus habet. *Ovid.*

that Men may take notice of it with terror, *Where the Worm never dies, and the Fire is never quenched*: A Worm gnawing upon the Bowels, that are of the moſt tender and quick ſenſe, Fire that cauſes the moſt vehement pain, are fearful Repreſentations to typify the Torments of the Damned: And that the Worm is undying, and the Fire unquenchable, infinitely aggravates their Puniſhment.

The Propoſition is this: That the puniſhment of thoſe who will retain their pleaſant or profitable Sins, ſhall be extream and eternal.

In the handling of this Point, I will,

1. Diſcourſe of the Extremity of the Puniſhment.
2. Of the Eternity of it.

1. Of the Extremity of it.

Before the particular Deſcription of the Pains of the Damned, I ſhall obſerve in general, That the full Repreſentation of Hell is beyond all humane Expreſſion, nay our moſt fearful Thoughts cannot equal the Horror of it. *Who knows the Power of thine Anger?* Pſal. 90. 11.

ger? What are the prepared Plagues, by infinite Juſtice and Almighty Wrath for obſtinate Sinners? It is impoſſible for the moſt guilty and trembling Conſcience to inlarge its ſad apprehenſions according to the degrees of that Miſery. *The Lord will ſhew forth his Wrath, and make his Power known in the Veſſels fitted for Deſtruction.* None can tell what God can do, and what Man ſhall ſuffer, when made capable to endure ſuch Torments for ever, as now would preſently conſume him. As the Glory of Heaven cannot be fully underſtood till enjoyed, ſo the Torments of Hell cannot be comprehended till felt. But we may have ſome diſcovery of thoſe unknown Terrors, by the following Conſiderations.

1. The moſt heavy Judgments of God upon Sinners here, are light and tolerable in Compariſon of the Puniſhment of Sinners in the next State. For,

(1.) Temporal Evils of all kinds and degrees, as Peſtilence, Famine, War, are deſigned for the bringing of Men to a ſight and ſenſe of their Sins, and are common to Good and Bad here.

here. And if his Anger be ſo terrible when he chaſtiſes as a compaſſionate Father, what is his Fury when he puniſhes as a ſevere Judg? If the correcting Remedies ordered by his Wiſdom and Love for the converſion of Sinners be ſo ſharp, what is the deadly revenge of his irreconcileable Hatred?

(2.) The Miſeries of the preſent State are allayed with ſome enjoyments. None are ſo univerſally afflicted, ſo deſolate, but ſomething remains to ſweeten the ſenſe of their Sufferings. Judgments are tempered with Mercies. No Man is tortur'd with all Diſeaſes, nor forſaken of all Friends, nor utterly without Comfort. And when the Affliction is irremediable, yet if our grief produces Sympathy in others, 'tis ſome eaſe to the troubled Mind, and by that aſſiſtance the Burthen is made lighter. But in Hell the Damned are ſurrounded with Terrors, encompaſt with Flames, without any thing to refreſh their Sorrows, not a drop of Water to a Lake of Fire. All that was eſteemed Felicity here, is totally withdrawn. Death puts a period to their Lives, and Pleaſures of Sin for ever. For 'tis moſt juſt, that thoſe Objects which were abu-

ſed by their Luſts, and alienated their Hearts from their Duty and Felicity, ſhould be taken away. And which is extream Miſery, in their moſt pitiful State they are abſolutely unpitied. Pity is the cheap and univerſal Lenitive, not denied to the moſt guilty in their Sufferings here: for the Law of Nature inſtructs us to pity the Man, when the Malefactor ſuffers. But even this is not afforded to the Damned. All their Agonies and Cries cannot incline the Compaſſion of God, and the bleſſed Spirits in Heaven towards them: for they are not compaſſionable Objects, their Miſery being the juſt effect of their perverſe obſtinate Choice. And in Hell all human tender Affections are extinguiſht for ever. Now 'tis the perfection of Miſery, the exceſs of Deſolation, to be deprived of all good things pleaſing to our Deſires, and to ſuffer all Evils from which we have the deepeſt averſation and abhorrence. As in Heaven all Good is eminently compriſed, and nothing but Good, ſo in Hell all Evil is in exceſſive degrees, and nothing but Evil.

(3.) Temporal Evils are inflicted by the

the mediation of ſecond Cauſes that are of a limited power to hurt: but in the next World he more immediately torments the Damned by his abſolute Power. The Apoſtle tells us, that the Wicked *are puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power.* What is the laſhing with a few Ruſhes, to a blow given by the hand of a Giant that ſtrikes dead at once? This compariſon is below the Truth. 2 Theſ. 1.

More particularly, the ſtate of Miſery is ſet forth in Scripture by ſuch repreſentations as may powerfully inſtruct and terrify even the moſt carnal Men. Nothing is more intolerably painful, than ſuffering the violence of Fire inraged with Brimſtone: and Hell is deſcribed by a Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, wherein the Wicked are tormented. Whether the Fire be Ma-

Indeed it is difficult to conceive how a material Fire can act on a ſpiritual Subſtance. But 'tis unreaſonable to determine that it is impoſſible. For if we conſider what Pain is, it is as conceivable how pure Spirits are capable of it, as Spirits in Conjunction with Bodies. The human Soul in its Nature is Spiritual as the Angels, yet has a painful ſenſe of Fire or other afflicting Evils incumbent on the Senſes. The Body meerly feels not pain, but it paſſes through the Body to the Soul. If the Soul by a ſtrong diverſion of Thoughts apply it ſelf to an Object, the Body is inſenſible of Pain, as is evident in ſome Diſeaſes; and that in the heat of Battel, deep Wounds are not felt. And as God by a natural Conſtitution has ordered, that the Body ſo touched and moved, excites a painful Senſe in the Soul, he may have ordained that the Devils ſhall feel the impreſſions of Material Fire, in the places to which they ſhall be confin'd.

terial or Metaphorical, the reality and intenſeneſs of the Torment is ſignified by it. But the ordinary Fire, tho mingled with the moſt torturing Ingredients, is not an adequate repreſentation of it. For that is prepared by Men, but the Fire of Hell is prepared by the Wrath of God for the Devil and his Angels. The Divine Power is illuſtriouſly manifeſted in that terrible Preparation: So that, as ſome of the Fathers expreſs it, if one of the Damned might paſs from thoſe Flames into the fierceſt Fires here, it were to exchange a Torment for a Refreſhment. The Scripture ſpeaks of the vehement heat and fiery Thirſt, and outer Darkneſs in which the Damned ſuffer, to ſatisfy the rights of Juſtice in the torment of thoſe Senſes, for the Pleaſure of which Men wilfully broke the Laws of God.

But the Soul being the chief Sinner, ſhall be the chief Mourner in thoſe Regions of Sorrow. An Image of this we have in the Agonies of Spirit, which ſometimes the Saints themſelves are in here, and which the moſt ſtubborn Sinners can neither reſiſt nor endure. *Job* was afflicted in that manner that he complains, *The Arrows of the Almighty*

are

are with me, the Poiſon whereof drinks up my Spirit, the Terrors of God ſet themſelves in Array againſt me. If a Spark of his Diſpleaſure falls on the guilty Conſcience, it tears and blows up all, as a Fire-ball caſt into a Magazine. *Solomon,* who underſtood the Frame of humane Nature, tells us, *The Spirit of a Man can bear his Infirmity:* that is, the Mind fortified by principles of moral Counſel and Conſtancy, can endure the aſſault of external Evils: but *a wounded Spirit who can bear?* This is moſt inſupportable when the ſting and remorſe of the Mind is from the ſenſe of Guilt: for then God appears an Enemy, righteous and ſevere; and who can encounter with offended Omnipotence? Such is the ſharpneſs of his Sword, and the weight of his Hand, that every ſtroke is deadly inward. Satan the cruel Enemy of Souls, exaſperates the Wounds. He diſcovers and charges Sin upon the Conſcience with all its killing Aggravations, and conceals the divine Mercy, the only Lenitive and Balm to the Wounded Spirit. What Viſions of Horror, what Spectacles of Fear, what Scenes of Sorrow are preſented to the diſtracted

Mind by the Prince of Darkneſs? And which heightens the Miſery, Man is a worſe Enemy to himſelf than Satan: he falls upon his own Sword and deſtroys himſelf. The guilty Conſcience turns *the Sun into Darkneſs, and the Moon into Blood:* the precious Promiſes of the Goſpel, that aſſure Favour and Pardon to returning and relenting Sinners, are turn'd into Arguments of deſpair, by reflecting upon the abuſe and provocation of Mercy, that the Advocate in God's boſom, is become the Accuſer. Whatever the Soul-wounded Sinner ſees or hears, afflicts him; whatever he thinks, torments him. All the Diverſions in the World, Buſineſs, Pleaſures, merry Converſation, Comedies, are as ineffectual to give freedom from thoſe Stings and Furies in the Breaſt, as the ſprinkling of Holy Water is to expel a raging Devil from a poſſeſt Perſon. Thoſe who in their Pride and Jollity, have deſpiſed ſerious Religion, either as a fond Tranſport and Extaſy towards God, or a dull Melancholy and Dejection about the Soul, or an idle Scrupuloſity about indifferent things, yet when God has ſet their Sins with

with all their killing circumſtances in order before their Eyes, how changed, how confounded are they at that Apparition? how reſtleſs, with the dreadful expectation of the doom that attends them! *Belſhazzer* in the midſt of his Cups, and Herd of Concubines, by a few Words written on the Wall, containing his Proceſs and Judgment, was ſo terrified by his guilty jealous Conſcience, that his Joints were looſed, Nature ſunk under the apprehenſion. Now all theſe troubles of Mind, are but the beginnings of Sorrows, but the Smoak of the infernal Furnace, but Earneſts of that terrible Sum which divine Juſtice will ſeverely exact of the Wicked in Hell.

Indeed theſe Examples are rare, and not regarded by the moſt, and by ſome lookt on as the effects of Diſtraction; but to convince the bold and careleſs Sinners who never felt the ſtings of an awakned Conſcience, what extream Terrors ſeize upon the Wicked in the other World? Conſider,

1. The Apprehenſion ſhall be more clear and enlarged than in the preſent State. Now the Soul is oppreſt with a weight of Clay, and in Drowſineſs and

Obſcurity. The great things of Eternity are of little force to convince the Conſcience, or perſwade the Affections. But then the Soul ſhall work with the quickeſt activity. The Mind ſhall by an irreſiſtible Light take a full view of all afflicting Objects. The moſt ſtupid and unconcerned Sinners ſhall then ſee and feel their ruin'd State, what a glorious Felicity they have loſt, what a Miſery they are plunged into, without any poſſibility of leſſening it by falſe Conceits, and receiving any relief by the error of Imagination.

2. The mournful Thoughts ſhall be always fixt upon what is tormenting. The Soul in conjunction with the Body cannot always apply it ſelf to one ſort of Objects. For the Miniſtry of the ſenſible Faculties is requiſite to its Operations. And the Body muſt be ſupported by Eating and Drinking and Reſt, which interrupts troubleſom Thoughts. Beſides, the variety of Objects and Accidents here avert the Mind ſometimes from what is afflicting. But the ſeparate Soul is in no dependance on the Body, and after their reunion, there ſhall be no neceſſity of Food or Sleep, or any other animal actions to ſupport it,

it, but it ſhall be reſtored to a new capacity for new Torments, and preſerved in that miſerable State by the power of God. There will be nothing then to divert the loſt Soul from ſad Reflections upon its Miſery. There are no lucid intervals in Hell.

3. All the tormenting Paſſions will then be let looſe at once upon the guilty Creature. And if there be no ſingle Paſſion ſo weak, but heightned, will break the Spirit, and render Life ſo miſerable, that a Man will take Sanctuary in the Grave to eſcape; how miſerable is the Condition when the moſt fierce and united Paſſions war againſt the Soul? This is ſignified by the *never-dying Worm* that gnaws on the tendereſt parts, and of quickeſt ſenſe. Shame, Sorrow, Deſpair, Fury, Hatred and Revenge are ſome of that brood of Vipers that torment the Damned.

1. Shame is a Paſſion of which human Nature is very ſenſible, and this in the higheſt degree of Confuſion ſhall ſeize on the Wicked. For all the juſt cauſes of Shame ſhall then meet. The inward ſource of it is the conſciouſneſs of Guilt, or Turpitude and Folly in the Actions; and all theſe are the inſepa- Dan. 12. 2.

rable

Tacitâ ſudant præcordia culpa. *Juv.*

rable Adjuncts of Sin. The guilty Soul by a piercing reflection upon its Crimes, has a ſecret ſhame of its Degeneracy and Unworthineſs. The Paſſion is increaſt, when a diſcovery is made of vile practices that defile and debaſe a Man, expoſe to Contempt and Infamy, before Perſons of high Quality and eminent Vertue, whom we admire and reverence, and whoſe eſteem we value. To be ſurprized in an unworthy Action by ſuch a Perſon, diſorders the Blood, and transfuſes a Colour into the Face, to cover it with a Vail of Bluſhing. And the more numerous the Spectators are, the more the Diſgrace is aggravated. And if Deriſion be joined with the Ignominy, it cauſes extream Diſpleaſure. O the univerſal Confuſion, the overpowring amazement that will ſeiſe on Sinners in the great Day of Diſcovery, when all the Works of Darkneſs, all their baſe Senſualities ſhall be revealed before God, Angels and Saints! When all the Covers of Shame ſhall be taken off, the Excuſes and Denials, to extenuate or conceal their Sins, ſhall vaniſh, and their Breaſts be tranſparent to the Eyes of all! How will they be aſhamed of their foul and permanent Deformity in the

the Light of that glorious Preſence? How will they be aſtoniſht to appear in all their Pollutions before that bright and immenſe Theatre? How will they be confounded to ſtand in all their Guilt before that ſublime and ſevere Tribunal? How will they endure the upbraidings for all the Sins which they have ſo wickedly committed, and the deriſion for the Puniſhment they ſo deſervedly ſuffer? The holy Judg will *laugh at their Calamity, and mock when their fear comes. The Righteous alſo ſhall ſee, and ſhall laugh at them,* Lo theſe are the Men that made not God their Portion, but periſhing Vanities, that prefer'd ſweet Folly before ſevere Wiſdom. The Devils will reproach them for that ſcornful advantage they had over them, That as Children are ſeduc'd for things of Luſtre to part with real Treaſures, ſo they were eaſily perſuaded for the Trifles of Time to exchange Eternal Happineſs. *Whither will they cauſe their Shame to go?* Thoſe black Sinners that here never change colour for their Filthineſs, that hardned by cuſtom in Sin, are impenetrable to Shame, as the brute Beaſts that are abſolutely deſtitute of reaſon, nay that have not Jer. 14. 12.

not only overcome all tenderneſs, but *glory in their Shame*, ſhall glow at the manifeſtation of their ſordid Luſts, their vile Servilities, and be covered with Confuſion, and the ſenſe of it ſhall be revived in their Minds for ever.

2. To open Shame is joined the greateſt inward Sorrow. This Paſſion, when violent, penetrates the Soul in all its Faculties, and faſtens it to the afflicting Object. When it dwells in the Boſom, it gives an eaſy entrance to whatever cheriſhes and increaſes it, and rejects what might aſſwage and leſſen the ſenſe of the Evil. The moſt pleaſant things do not excite Deſire or Joy, but exaſperate Grief. Like thoſe Animals that convert the beſt nouriſhment into their own Poiſon; ſo deep Sorrow receives mournful impreſſions from all things, and turns the ſweeteſt Comforts of Life into Wormwood and Gall. The cauſes of Sorrow are either the loſs of ſome valued Good, or the ſenſe of ſome preſent Evil. And the Sorrow is more violent, as the Cauſe is great in it ſelf, and in the apprehenſion and tenderneſs of the Sufferers. Now both theſe Cauſes, with all the heavy Circumſtances that can multiply

and

and aggravate Sorrow, meet in Hell the Centre of Misery.

The loss is inconceivably great. If *Cain* when banish'd from the Society of the Saints, where God was publickly worship'd, and by spiritual Revelations and visible Apparitions, graciously made himself known, cry'd out in anguish of Soul, *My punishment is greater than I can bear: from thy Face shall I be hid, and I shall be a Fugitive upon the Earth:* how intolerable will be the final separation from his glorious and joyful Presence be? In the clear and transforming Vision of his Glory, and the intimate and indissolvable Union with him by Love, consists the Perfection and Satisfaction of the immortal Soul. The Felicity resulting from it, is as entire and eternal, as God is Great and True, who has so often promis'd it in Scripture. Now the Damned are for ever excluded from the reviving Presence of God. 'Tis often seen how tenderly and impatiently the humane Spirit resents the loss of a dear Relation. *Jacob* for the supposed death of *Joseph*, was so overcome with Grief, that when all his Sons and Daughters rose up to comfort him, he refused to be

Juſſiſti Domine, & ſic eſt ut pœna ſit ſibi omnis inordinatus affectus. *Aug.*

be comforted, and ſaid, *I will go down mourning to the Grave.* Indeed this overwhelming Sorrow, is both a Sin and a Puniſhment. 'Tis ordain'd, by the righteous and unchangeable Decree of God, that every inordinate Affection in Man ſhould be his own Tormentor. But if the loſs of a poor frail Creature for a ſhort time be ſo afflicting, how inſupportable will the Sorrow be for the loſs of the Bleſſed God for ever? Who can fully conceive the Extent and Degrees of that Evil? For an Evil riſes in proportion to the Good of which it deprives us: It muſt therefore follow, that Celeſtial Bleſſedneſs being an infinite eternal Good, the excluſion from it is proportionably Evil. And as the Felicity of the Saints reſults from the Fruition of God in Heaven, and from compariſon with the contrary State: So the Miſery of the Damned ariſes, both from the thoughts of loſt Happineſs, and from the laſting Pain that torments them.

It may be replied, If this be the utmoſt Evil that is conſequent to Sin, the Threatning of it, is likely to deter but few from the pleaſing their corrupt Appetites: for carnal Men have ſuch groſs and

and vitiated Affections that are careleſs of ſpiritual Happineſs. *They cannot taſte and ſee how good the Lord is.*

To this a clear Anſwer may be given: In the next State, where the Wicked ſhall be for ever without thoſe Carnal Objects, that here deceive and delight them, when deprived of all things that pleaſes their voluptuous Senſes, their Apprehenſions will be changed; they ſhall underſtand what a Happineſs it is to enjoy God, and what a Miſery to be expell'd from the Celeſtial Paradiſe. Our Saviour tells the *Jews, There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth, when ye ſhall ſee* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you your ſelves thruſt out.* How will they pine with envy at the ſight of that triumphant Felicity, of which they ſhall never be Partakers? To ſee that bleſſed Company entring into the ſacred Manſions of Light, will make the loſs of Heaven infinitely more diſcernable and terrible to the Wicked, who ſhall be caſt into *outer Darkneſs*, and for ever be deprived of Communion with God and his Saints. *Depart from* Luke 13. 28.

from me, will be as dreadful a part of the Judgment as *Eternal Fire*.

With the loſs of the moſt excellent Good, the ſuffering of the moſt afflicting painful Evil is join'd. The Sentence is, *Depart ye Curſed into Everlaſting Fire*. God's Juſtice is not ſatisfied in depriving them of Heaven, but inflicts the moſt heavy Puniſhment upon Senſe and Conſcience in the Damned: for as the Soul and Body in their ſtate of union in this Life, were both guilty, the one as a Guide, the other as the Inſtrument of Sin; and if an imaginarry Sorrow conceived in the Mind without a real external Cauſe, as in Melancholly Perſons, when groſs Vapours darken and corrupt the brightneſs and purity of the Spirits that are requiſite for its chearful Operations, is often ſo oppreſſing that Nature ſinks under it: How inſupportable will the Sorrow of condemned Sinners be, under the impreſſion and ſenſe of God's Almighty and avenging Hand, when it ſhall fully appear how pure and holy he is in his Anger for Sin, how juſt and dreadful in puniſhing Sinners? It may be the indulgent Sinner may leſſen his fear

fear of Hell, by fancying the number of Sufferers will aſſwage the ſenſe of their Miſery. But this is a fooliſh Miſtake; For the number of Sufferers ſhall be ſo far from affording any relief, that the Miſery is aggravated by the Company and Communication of the Miſerable. Every one is ſurrounded with Sorrows, and by the ſights of Wo about him, feels the univerſal Grief. The weeping and wailing, the cries and dolorous expreſſions of all the Damned, increaſes the torment and vexation of every one. As when the Wind conſpires with the Flame, 'tis more fierce and ſpreading.

3. The Concomitant of Sorrow will be Fury and Rage againſt themſelves, as the true cauſes of their Miſery. For God will make ſuch a diſcovery of his righteous Judgment, that not only the Saints ſhall glorify his Juſtice in the condemnation of the Wicked, but they ſhall be ſo convinc'd of it, as not to be able to charge their Judg with any defect of Mercy, or exceſs of Rigour in his proceedings againſt them. As the Man in the Parable of the Marriage-Feaſt, when taxt for his preſumptuous intruſion without a Wedding-Garment,

How camest thou in hither? was speechless: so they will find no plea for their Justification and Defence, but must receive the eternal Doom with Silence and Confusion. Then Conscience shall revive the bitter remembrance of all the methods of divine Mercy for their Salvation, that were ineffectual by their Contempt and Obstinacy. All the compassionate Calls by his Word, with the holy Motions of the Spirit, were like the sowing of Seed in the Stony Ground, that took no root, and never came to perfection. All his terrible Threatnings were but as Thunder to the Deaf, or Lightning to the Blind, that little affects them: the bounty of his Providence design'd *to lead them to Repentance*, had the same effect, as the Showers of Heaven upon Briars and Thorns that makes them grow the faster. And that a Mercy so ready to pardon, did not produce in them a correspondent affection of grateful obedient Love, but by the most unworthy provocations they pluck'd down the Vengeance due to obstinate Rebels, will so enrage the Damned against themselves, that they will be less miserable by the Misery they suffer, than by the conviction of their torn Minds, that

that they were the ſole Cauſes of it. *What Repentings will be kindled within them,* for the ſtupid neglect of *the great Salvation* ſo dearly purchaſed, and earneſtly offered to them? What a fiery addition to their Torment, that when God was ſo willing to ſave them, they were ſo wilful to be Damned. They will never forgive themſelves, that for the ſhort and mean Pleaſures of Senſe, which if enjoyed a thouſand years, cannot recompence the loſs of Heaven, nor requite the pains of Hell for an Hour, they muſt be deprived of the one, and ſuffer the other for ever.

4. The Sorrow and Rage will be increaſed by Deſpair: for when the wretched Sinner ſees the Evil is peremptory, and no Outlet of Hope, he abandons himſelf to the violence of Sorrow, and by cruel Thoughts wounds the Heart more, than the fierceſt Furies in Hell can. This Miſery that flows from deſpair ſhall be more fully opened under the diſtinct conſideration of the Eternity of Hell. Briefly, as the Bleſſed are in Heaven, and Heaven is in them, by thoſe holy and joyful Affections that are always exerciſed in the Divine Preſence, ſo the Damned are in

Hell, and Hell is in them by thoſe fierce and miſerable Paſſions that continually prey upon them.

2. The Eternity of their Miſery makes it above all other Conſiderations intollerable. Our Saviour repeats it thrice in the ſpace of a few Verſes, to terrify thoſe who ſpare ſome favourite Corruption, *that in Hell their Worm dies not, and the Fire is never quenched.* God will never reverſe his Sentence, and they ſhall never change their State. How willingly would carnal Men raze the Word *Eternal* out of the Scriptures, but to their grief they find it joined with the Felicity of Heaven, and the Torments of Hell. The ſecond Death has all the terrible qualities of the firſt, but not the eaſe and end it brings to Miſery. All the Tears of thoſe forlorn Wretches, ſhall never quench one ſpark of the Fire. Where are the delicious Fare, the Muſick, the Purple, and all the carnal Delights of the rich Man? they are all changed into a contrary ſtate of Miſery, and that ſtate is fixt for ever. From his vaniſhing Paradiſe he deſcended into an everlaſting Hell. In this the Vengeance of God is infinitely more heavy than the moſt terrible execution

cution from Men. Human Juſtice and Power can inflict but one Death (that will be ſoon diſpatcht) upon a Malefactor worthy to ſuffer a hundred Deaths; if he be condemned to the Fire, they cannot make him live and die together, to burn and not be conſumed: But God will ſo far ſupport the Damned in their Torments, that they ſhall always have Strength to feel, though no Strength to endure them. Thoſe extream Torments which would extinguiſh the preſent Life in a Moment, ſhall be ſuffered for ever. This Conſideration infinitely aggravates the Miſery. For the loſt Soul rackt with the fearful Contemplation of what it muſt ſuffer for ever, feels as it were at once all the Evils that ſhall torment it in its whole duration. The perpetuity of the Miſery is always felt by previſion. This is as the cruel breaking of the Bones upon the Wheel, when the Soul is tormented by the foreſight of Miſery that without allays ſhall continue in the circulation of Eternal Ages. To make this more ſenſible, let us conſider, that Pain makes the Mind obſervant of the paſſing of the hours. In Pleaſures, Time with a quick and ſilent motion inſenſibly ſlides away: but

in Troubles the Hours are tedious; in violent Pains we reckon the Minutes as long. 'Tis obſervable how paſſionately the afflicted Pſalmiſt complains,

Pſal. 77. 7. *Will the Lord caſt off for ever? Will he be favourable no more? Doth his Promiſe fail for evermore? Hath he forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger ſhut up his tender Mercies?* In what various pathetick Forms does he expreſs the ſame Affection? Though he had aſſurance that the gracious God would not be always ſevere, yet his Anguiſh forc'd from him Complaints, as if the moment of his Trouble were an Eternity. But what ſtrains of Sorrow are among the Damned, who beſides the preſent ſenſe of their Miſery, have always in their Thoughts the vaſt Eternity wherein they muſt ſuffer it?

When three terrible Evils were propounded to *David*'s choice, pining Famine for three Years, or bloody War for three Months, or devouring Peſtilence for three Days, he choſe the ſhorteſt, though in it ſelf the heavieſt Evil.

Many ſad Days muſt paſs under the other Judgments, where Death by anticipation in ſuch variety of Shapes would

would be preſented to the Mind, that the lingring expectation of it would afflict more than the ſudden ſtroke: whereas the fury of the Peſtilence would be ſoon over. But the Damned have not this relief, *but ſhall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.* How earneſtly *do they ſeek for Death*, but cannot find it? What a Favour would they eſteem it to be annihilated? For certainly, if when the Evils in the preſent State are ſo multiplied, that no Comfort is left, or ſo violent that the afflicted Perſon cannot enjoy them, and refreſh his ſorrowful Spirit, Death is choſen rather than Life; it cannot be imagined that in the future State, where the Miſery is extream, and nothing remains to allay it, that the Damned ſhould be in love with the unhappy good of ſimple being, and not chuſe an abſolute extinction if it might be.

If any one ſhould be ſo fooliſh to think that Cuſtom will render that State more tolerable, he will find a terrible confutation of his vain Fancy. Indeed, continuance under light Evils, may arm the Mind with patience to bear them, but in great Extremities it makes the Evil more ponderous and

intolerable. He that is tortured with the Stone, or on the Rack, the longer the Torture continues, the leſs able he is to ſuſtain it. In ſhort, as the Joy of Heaven is infinitely more raviſhing, that the Bleſſed are without fear of loſing of it; ſo the Miſery of Hell is proportionably tormenting, that the Damned are abſolutely deſtitute of hopes of a releaſe. *O 'tis a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, who lives for ever, and will puniſh for ever incorrigible Sinners!

There are ſome who ſtrongly fancy, 'tis not conſiſtent with Divine Juſtice, to inflict an eternal Puniſhment for temporary Sins. Therefore they ſoften the Sentence, by interpreting the Words of Chriſt, *Theſe ſhall go into everlaſting Puniſhment*, of the annihilation of impenitent Sinners; that is, they ſhall be for ever deprived of Heaven, but not ſuffer Torments for ever.

To this there is a clear Anſwer: 1. The direct *oppoſition between everlaſting Puniſhment, and everlaſting Life*, in the words of Chriſt, is a convincing Argument they are to be underſtood in the

the ſame extent for an abſolute Eternity. And the words in the *Revelation* are ſo expreſs, that they admit no mollifying Interpretation, *They are tormented Day and Night, for ever and ever:* Which neceſſarily infer, the tormented have Life and Senſe for ever. Now that in Scripture 'tis evident, that God hath decreed and denounced eternal Puniſhment to obſtinate Sinners, is ſufficient to ſatisfy all Enquiries about the Juſtice of it: for Divine Juſtice is the correſpondence of God's Will and Actions, with the Perfections of his Holy Nature. From hence we may infer with invincible Evidence, that whatever he pronounces in Judgment, and conſequently inflicts, is moſt Righteous. The Truth is, we may as eaſily conceive there is no God, as that God is unjuſt; becauſe abſolute Rectitude is an inſeparable Perfection of his Nature. Thus the Apoſtle with abhorrence rejects the Queſtion, *Is God Unrighteous who taketh Vengeance? God forbid: for then how ſhall God judg the World?* That were to deny him to be God, who is the Creator, and King, and Judg of the World. 'Tis a full Reply to all the pittiful Shifts that are made

Rom. 3. 5, 6.

made use of to elude the plain meaning of the eternal Judgment that will pass upon the Wicked; *Shall mortal Man be more just than God? shall a Man be more pure than his Maker?* The Reprobates have now some bold Advocates, that plead those things for favour to them, which they will not dare to plead for themselves at the last Day. The Holy Judg will then cut off all their Excuses, and reduce them to a defenceless silence, before he cuts them off. *God will be justified in his Sentence, and overcome when he is judgeth.*

Job 4. 17.

The Righteousness of the Proceedings at the last Day, in determining the Wicked to a state of everlasting Torments, has been consider'd in the Discourse of *Judgment*, and will farther appear by the following Considerations.

1. The Wisdom of God requires, that the Punishment threatned in his Law, as it must be so firmly decreed, that all obstinate Rebels shall of necessity undergo it, so it must incomparably exceed all temporal Evils, to which Men may be exposed for their Obedience to the Divine Commands, other-

otherwiſe the Threatning would not be an effectual reſtraint from Sin: For the propinquity of an Evil makes a ſtrong impreſſion upon the Mind, and a preſent Fear makes a Perſon ſollicitous to avoid the incurſion of what is ready to ſeize on him, without forecaſting to prevent an Evil look'd on at a diſtance. Therefore that the Sanction of the Divine Law may preſerve the Precepts Inviolable, that there may be a continual reverence of it, and a fixed reſolution in the Hearts of Men not to tranſgreſs, the Penalty threatned muſt be in its own Nature ſo terrible, that the fear of it may conquer the apprehenſion of all preſent Evils that can be inflicted to conſtrain us to ſin. Therefore our Saviour warns his Diſciples, *Fear not them that can kill the Body*, (make that part die that is mortal) *but fear him that after he has killed, has power to caſt into Hell; yea, I ſay unto you, fear him.* Now if the threatning of an everlaſting Hell, through Infidelity and Inconſideration, be not effectual in the Minds of Men to reſtrain them from Sin, if temporary Torments in the next State were only threatned, which are infinitely

nitely more eaſy and tolerable, carnal Sinners would follow the ſwinge of their corrupt Appetites, and commit Iniquity with greedineſs; this would ſeem to reflect upon the Wiſdom of the Lawgiver, as if he were defective in not binding his Subjects firmly to their Duty, and the Ends of Government would not be obtain'd.

2. God, as the Sovereign Ruler of the World, has eſtabliſh'd an inſeparable Connexion between the Choice and Actions of Men here, and their future Condition for ever. The promiſed Reward of Obedience is ſo excellent and eternal, that all the Allurements of the World vaniſh in compariſon with it: and there is ſuch an infallible Aſſurance of this Reward in the Word of God, that all, and only thoſe who ſincerely obey his Commands, ſhall enjoy it in the future State; that a ſerious Believer who ponders things, cannot be diverted from his Duty by preſent Temptations. Beſides, by a Chain of Conſequences, ſinful Pleaſures are linked with eternal puniſhment threatned in the Divine Law; and he that will enjoy forbidden Pleaſures, binds himſelf to ſuffer all

all the Pains annexed to them. Now when God has, from his excellent Goodneſs and undeſerved Mercy, aſſured Men of the Glory and Joys of Heaven that are unſpeakable and eternal, upon the gracious Terms of the Goſpel; and, upon their deſpiſing it, threatned Eternal Miſery, if Men obſtinately neglect ſo great Salvation; how reaſonable is it they ſhould inherit their own Choice? There is no middle State in the next World, no tolerable mediocrity, but two contrary States; yet alike in this, that the Happineſs and Miſery are equally Eternal: and 'tis juſt that all who neglect eternal Life, ſhould ſuffer eternal Death: for 'tis the natural and neceſſary Conſequence of their Option: Therefore Sinners are charged with extream madneſs *to wrong their own Souls, and to love Death.* Prov. 8. 36.

3. It will appear how unqualified the Damned are for the leaſt favour, if we conſider their continual hatred and Blaſphemies of God. The Seeds of this are in wicked obſtinate Sinners here, who are ſtiled *haters of God*; but in the Damned this enmity is direct and explicit,

explicit, the Fever is heightned into a Frenzy, the bleſſed God is the Object of their Curſes and eternal Averſation. Our Saviour tells us, that in Hell there *is weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth*; extream Sorrow, and extream Fury; Deſpair and Rage are the proper Paſſions of loſt Souls. For when the guilty Sufferers are ſo weak, that they cannot by Patience endure their Torments, nor by Strength reſiſt the Power that inflicts them, and are wicked and ſtubborn, they are irritated by their Miſery, and foam out Blaſphemies againſt the righteous Judg. If their Rage could extend to him, and their Power were equal to their Deſires, they would dethrone the moſt High. Hatred takes pleaſure in Revenge, either real or imaginary: and although God is infinitely above the tranſports of their Fury, and all their rancorous Imprecations are reflexively pernicious to themſelves, like Arrows ſhot againſt the Sun, that fall down upon their Heads that ſhot them, yet they are always venting their Malice againſt the juſt Power that torments them. 'Tis ſaid of the Worſhippers of the Beaſt,

Beaſt, *that they gnawed their Tongues for Pain, and blaſphemed the God of Heaven becauſe of their Pains.* The Torment and Blaſphemies of thoſe impenitent Idolaters, are a true repreſentation of the ſtate of the Damned. From hence it appears they are the proper Objects of revenging Juſtice. How can we reaſonably conceive, that God, in favour to the Reprobates, ſhould croſs the eſtabliſhed order of Creation? For two Ranks of Beings were made, the Material, of periſhing Principles, the Spiritual, of an immortal Duration: And will God withdraw his Conſervative Power of the guilty Soul in its Immortality, and to put an end to its deſerved Miſery, and ſelf-tormenting Reflections, annihilate it? If a Criminal were juſtly condemn'd to a ſevere Puniſhment, and ſhould contumeliouſly and fiercely reproach the Prince, by whoſe Authority he was condemn'd, could it be expected there ſhould be a mitigation of the Sentence? And is it a Thought conſiſtent with the reaſonable Mind, that the righteous Judg of the World, will reverſe or mitigate the Sentence againſt the Damned, who blaſpheme his Majeſty Rev. 16. 10, 11.

and

and Juſtice? and if they were as omnipotent to effect, as they are malicious to deſire, would deſtroy his Being. 'Tis true, the Divine Threatning does not bind God to a rigorous execution of it upon Sinners: he has declar'd, if *Sinners will turn from their evil ways, he will repent of the Evil he purpos'd to do unto them*: but when Threatnings are part of the Laws whereby Men are govern'd, it is congruous to the Wiſdom and Juſtice of the Law-giver to execute them in their full force upon the obſtinate Offenders, withal conſidering the inflicting of them is ſo far from working any ingenuous Change in thoſe Rebels, that thereby they become more fierce and obdurate.

Jer. 26. 3.

Laſtly, the immenſe Guilt that adheres to Sin, requires a proportion in the Puniſhment. 'Tis a rule in all Courts of Judicature, that the degrees of an Offence ariſe according to the degrees of Dignity of the Perſon offended: Now the Majeſty of God is truly infinite, againſt whom Sin is committed; and conſequently the Guilt of Sin exceeds our boundleſs Thoughts. This is the reaſon of the Sentence

Sentence, *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them.* The Curſe threatned, includes the firſt and the ſecond Death. What a diſhonour is it to the *God of Glory*, that proud Duſt ſhould fly in his Face, and controul his Authority? What a provocation, that the reaſonable Creature, that is naturally and neceſſarily a Subject, ſhould deſpiſe the Divine Law and Lawgiver? Though carnal Minds elevate the Guilt of Sin, yet weighed *in the Scales of the Sanctuary*, 'tis found ſo heavy, that no Puniſhment inflicted on Sinners, exceeds, either in the degrees or duration, the deſert of Sin.

God's Juſtice is not ſatisfied in depriving them of Heaven, but inflicts the moſt heavy Puniſhment upon Senſe and Conſcience in the Damned: For as the Soul and Body in their State of Union in this Life were both guilty, the one as the Guide, the other as the Inſtrument of Sin; ſo 'tis equal, when reunited, they ſhould feel the penal Effects of it. Sinners ſhall then be tormented wherein they were moſt delighted; they ſhall be inveſted with

thoſe Objects, that will cauſe the moſt dolorous perceptions in their ſenſitive Faculties. The *Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever*, are words of a terrible ſignification. But no words can fully expreſs the terrible Ingredients of their Miſery: The Puniſhment will be in proportion to the Glory of God's Majeſty that is provoked, and the extent of his Power. And as the Soul was the principal, and the Body but an Acceſſary in the Works of Sin; ſo its capacious Faculties ſhall be far more tormented than the limited Faculties of the outward Senſes. The fiery Attributes of God ſhall be tranſmitted through the Glaſs of Conſcience, and concenter'd upon damned Spirits: The Fire without is not ſo tormenting as the Fire within them. How will the tormenting Paſſions be inflam'd? What Rancour, Reluctance, and Rage, againſt the juſt Power that ſentenc'd them to Hell? What impatience and indignation againſt themſelves for their wilful Sins, the juſt cauſe of it? How will they curſe their Creation, and wiſh their utter extinction, as the final Remedy of their Miſery? But all their ardent

Wiſhes are in vain; for the Guilt of Sin will never be expiated, nor God ſo far reconcil'd as to annihilate them. As long as there is Juſtice in Heaven, or Fire in Hell, as long as God and Eternity ſhall continue, they muſt ſuffer thoſe Torments, which the ſtrength and patience of an Angel cannot bear one hour.

I ſhall now draw ſome practical Inferences, and conclude this Subject.

1. From the Revelation in Scripture of the dreadful Puniſhment prepared for unreformed Sinners in the next State, we may underſtand the tender Mercies of God to Men; how willing he is they ſhould be ſaved, who are ſo wilful to be damned. Hell is repreſented to them by the moſt violent Figures, to terrify their Imaginations, and ſtrongly affect their Minds, that *they may flee from the Wrath to come.* God counſels, commands, intreats, urges Sinners to be wiſe, to foreſee and prevent the Evil that every Hour is approaching to them: and with Compaſſion and Indignation laments their

Miſery, and reproaches their Folly in bringing it upon themſelves. The Divine Mercy is as eminently and apparently declar'd to Men in the preſent corrupt State, in threatning Hell to excite their Fear, as in promiſing Heaven to allure their Hopes. For if carnal indulgent Sinners are not rouſed by a quick apprehenſion of Hell, they will ſecurely enjoy their pernicious Pleaſures, and deſpiſe the bleſſed Reward, and Heaven would be *as empty of humane Souls as 'tis full of Glory.*

(1.) Becauſe they are more capable to conceive of the Torments of Hell, than the Joys of Heaven. Storms and Darkneſs are more eaſily drawn by a Pencil, than a clear calm Day. Fire mix'd with Brimſtone, is very painful to Senſe; and the Fancy ſtrongly repreſents its Vehemence in tormenting the Body: And what Miſery the unceſſant remorſe of the guilty Conſcience will cauſe in the Damned hereafter, is in part underſtood by the ſecret Accuſations and Twinges of Conſcience in ſelf-condemning Sinners here. But they are abſolutely ſtrangers to the Joys of the Holy Ghoſt, to the Delights of the Soul in communion with

with God, and to Peace of Conſcience in his favour. They cannot without experience, *know how good the Lord is*, no more than ſee a taſte. To diſcourſe to them of ſpiritual Pleaſures that flow from the Divine Preſence, of the Happineſs of the Saints *that are before the Throne of God, and ſerve him in his Temple*, is to ſpeak with the Tongue of an Angel * unintelligible things. Their Minds and Language are confin'd to ſenſible things. The *natural Man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs to him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcern'd.* There may be in the carnal Mind a conception of Heaven as a Sanctuary wherein they may be ſecured from the Wrath of God, and ſome ſmothering confuſed thoughts of its Felicity, as the Idea of Light and Colours in one blind from his Birth; but only *the pure in Heart can ſee God*, as in the perfect Viſion of Glory hereafter, ſo in the imperfect reflection of it here.

* Si frigido loquar neſcit quod loquor. *Aug.*

(2.) Carnal Men are more diſpoſed to be wrought upon, by repreſenting the Torments of Hell, than the Joys of Heaven. For we can-

not love but what is known, nor enjoy but what is loved. And as the purification of the Heart from vicious Affections, is an excellent means to clear the Mind; ſo the illuſtration of the Mind is very influential to warm the Heart. The true conception of Heaven in its amiable Excellencies would powerfully and ſweetly raviſh the Affections; and of this prepared Souls are only capable. But thoſe who are ſenſual are without reliſh of ſpiritual Happineſs, and are allur'd or terrified only with what is pleaſant or painful to Fleſh.

Identidem dictitans, qualis artifex pereo! *Suet.*

'Tis recorded as the unparallel'd Folly of *Nero*, that when he was ready to cut his own Throat, to avoid the Fury of the multitude, he broke forth into great Expreſſions of Sorrow, what an excellent Artiſt he died. 'Twas not the loſs of the Roman Empire that ſo much troubled him, as that ſo much skill in Muſick died with him. He valued himſelf more as a Fidler, than an Emperor. Thus carnal Men with a folly infinitely more prodigious, when Death is near, are not ſo much affected with the loſs of the Crown of Glory, and the Kingdom

dom of Heaven, as with their preſent leaving this World and its Vanities. This makes Death intolerably bitter. Till the Love of God purifies the Heart, the fruition of his Preſence is not eſteemed or deſir'd. A Seraphim ſent from the preſence of God with a flaming Coal from the Altar, toucht the Lips of the Holy Prophet, and his Heart was preſently melted into a compliance with the Divine Will. But if a rebel Angel, that burns with another fire than of Divine Love, were diſpatch'd from Hell with a Coal from that Altar, where ſo many Victims are offer'd to Divine Juſtice as there are damned Souls, and touch'd obdurate Sinners, that they might have a lively ſenſe what it is to burn for ever, it were the moſt congrous and effectual means to reclaim them; like ſtubborn Metals, they are only made pliant by the Fire. From what has been ſaid, we may obſerve the heavenly Harmony between Mercy and Juſtice in God: he is the Father of Mercy, 'tis his natural Off-ſpring, his primary Inclination to the Creature, and the threatning of Vengeance againſt Sinners, is a gracious deſign to con-

ſtrain them with humility and repenting Affections to ſeek his Favour. Briefly, his ſeverity and flaming diſpleaſure never deſtroys Sinners, but to revenge the abuſe of his neglected Benignity and Clemency.

2. This ſhews the woful depravation of the Minds and Wills of Men, that chuſe Sin, when thinly painted over with Pleaſure, notwithſtanding the moſt dreadful and durable Torments, the certain Conſequences of it. Deſperate folly! either they believe, or do not, the eternal Torment of Hell. If they do not, how prodigious is their impiety? If they do, 'tis more prodigious they dare indulge their vicious Affections. A wicked Believer is more monſtrous and guilty than a wicked Infidel.

In ſome there is Atheiſm full of Folly, or Folly full of Atheiſm, that they will not believe the prepared Plagues for the wicked in the next State, becauſe they have no ſenſible proof of them. Reaſon, aſſiſted by Divine Revelation, affords ſo clear an evidence of the future State, and the Rewards and Puniſhments in it, that if any ſincerely apply themſelves to conſider things,

things, he will receive the moſt affective conviction of them. 'Tis true, there is not ſenſible evidence; for God will try our Faith before he ſatisfies our Sight: partly, that we may honour his Veracity, by yielding a firm aſſent to his Word before the actual accompliſhment of what is promiſed or threatn'd; and partly that our Obedience may be voluntary and unconſtrain'd, that his Goodneſs may take its riſe to reward us. But theſe preſumptuous Infidels live as if they had no Spirit, nothing of underſtanding in them: they are wholly under the Dominion of ſenſe, as if they were free and lawleſs, independant and unaccountable: as if the moſt high Governour of the World were an inferiour Being, without Power and Juſtice to vindicate the Honour of his deſpiſed Deity. They do not fear Hell, but are afraid they ſhould be fearful of it. This is ſuch a piece of folly, (but infinitely more woful) as that of the *Weſt-Indians*, who at their firſt invaſion by the *Spaniards*, were ſo terrified by their glittering Swords, that they preſently fled, and very conſiderately reſolved to hide them-

themſelves in the Day, and aſſault their Enemies in the Night. They were fearful to ſee their Danger, and raſh to encounter it, and fighting in the dark, were kill'd in the dark. The threatnings of eternal Death are the brandiſhing *of God's glittering Sword* before he ſtrikes; and ſenſual Infidels are afraid leſt the belief of thoſe terrible Truths ſhould pierce into their Breaſts; therefore are utterly averſe from due conſidering their Danger, and will not foreſee what they ſhall certainly ſuffer. 'Tis in vain to offer Arguments to convince them; for they are as deaf as Adders to the wiſeſt Inſtructions, till Senſe extort an Acknowledgment from them. They have hardned their Hearts and Faces againſt all Reproofs, and by an open contempt of Scripture-Threatnings, are paſt reclaiming. They are now fearleſs of that Judgment, the thoughts whereof make the Devils tremble: but the time will ſhortly come, when the Word of the righteous God, which now they deſpiſe, ſhall irreſiſtibly and immediately, like Lightning ſhot from Heaven, deſtroy them. There are many degrees of Sin, many ſteps in the

the deſcent to Hell, but the loweſt and neareſt the Gate of that infernal Priſon, is the ſcornful deriſion of God's dreadful Preparations for the wicked.

Others in the Chriſtian Church, who profeſs and preſume they are true Believers, yet by living indulgently in their pleaſant or profitable Sins, diſcover their Faith is counterfeit, or ſuch a ſuperficial aſſent to the Truth of God's Word that is without efficacy, and will not avail them at the laſt. Unfeigned Faith of the Divine Threatnings, produces ſuch a fear as would make Men circumſpect over their Hearts and Ways. The fear of a preſent deſtructive Evil controuls the moſt eager Appetites. 'Tis recorded, that when the Army of *Iſrael* was in purſuit of the *Philiſtines*, *Saul*, to compleat his Victory, forbad, upon pain of Death, that any ſhould taſte Food till the Sun was down. In the chace of their Enemies they paſs through a Wood dropping with Honey; yet notwithſtanding their Hunger and Faintneſs, and the eaſy proviſions before them, no Man ſo much as taſted it:

for

for the People feared the King's Oath. And did Men truly believe and fear the Law of God, threatning Hell for Sin, would they dare to commit it, though invited by pleaſant Temptations? Nay, not only a ſtrong Fear, but the mere ſuſpicion of great Danger, will reſtrain the moſt vehement deſires of Nature. What Perſon, though inflam'd with thirſt, would drink a Glaſs of cool Liquor, if he ſuſpected that deadly Poiſon were mix'd with it? And if Men were perſwaded that Sin is attended with eternal Death, would *they drink in Iniquity like Water?* The Devils themſelves are not able to conquer the fear of Judgment to come, they believe and tremble: Therefore when it is not active upon the Conſcience, it is either becauſe Men do not believe it, or they fancy, that retaining their beloved Luſts, they may obtain an eaſy Abſolution, and eſcape the Damnation of Hell, which the Eternal Judg has declar'd ſhall be the puniſhment of all that will not cut off the right Hand, and pluck out the right Eye, ſeparate their deareſt Corruptions from them. Aſtoniſhing Perverſe-

verſeneſs! How many will not diſcern nor cenſure that Folly in themſelves, which they will condemn in others for extream Madneſs? If one riotouſly laviſhes away his Eſtate, and for the ſhort Pleaſure of a few Years, be reduc'd with the Prodigal to extream Poverty, and to loathſom Impriſonment all his Life after, would he not be eſteem'd to have been beſides himſelf? Yet this is a very tolerable Caſe, in compariſon of expoſing the Soul to Eternal Vengeance, for the Pleaſures of Sin that are but for a Seaſon.

3. Let us ſtedfaſtly believe, and frequently conſider, that *Eternal Death is the Wages of Sin*, that we may renounce it with the deepeſt Abhorrence, and forſake it for ever. We are aſſured, from the Wiſdom and Compaſſion of our Saviour, that 'tis a powerful Means to mortify the Inclination to ſin, and to induce us to prevent and reſiſt all Temptations. The ſubtile Tempter cannot preſent any Motives, that to a rectified Mind will make Sin eligible. Let the Scales be even, and put into one all the Delights of the

the Senſes, all the Pleaſures and Honours of the World, that are the Elements of Carnal Felicity, how light are they againſt the Heavenly Glory? Will the Gain of the World compenſate the Loſs of the Soul and Salvation for ever? If there were any poſſible compariſon between deluding tranſient Vanities, and the Happineſs that is ſubſtantial and ſatisfying for ever, the Choice would be more difficult, and the Miſtake leſs culpable, but they vaniſh into nothing in the Compariſon. According to the Judgment of Senſe, would any one chuſe the enjoyment of the moſt exquiſite Pleaſures for a Year, and afterwards be content to burn in a Furnace for a Day; much leſs to enjoy them for a Day, and to burn for a Year? What ſtupid Brutes are they, who for momentany Delights, incur the fiery Indignation of God for ever? Try but the Finger with the Flame of a Candle, you will ſoon diſcover your weakneſs. Will the remembrance of ſenſual Delights allay the Torments of the Damned? When Carnal Luſts are moſt inflamed, and Objects are preſent, Pain will extinguiſh all the Plea-

ſure

ſure of the Senſes: And if actual Enjoyment cannot afford Delight when the Body is under a Diſeaſe, will the Reflections upon paſt Pleaſures in the Fancy and Memory, refreſh the Damned in their extream Torments? No, the remembrance will infinitely increaſe their Anguiſh, that for ſuch ſeeming and ſhort Pleaſures, they brought upon themſelves Miſery intolerable, without Eaſe or End. O that Men would ſtrip Sin of its diſguiſes, and waſh off its flattering Colours, and look into its odious Nature, and to the conſequential Evils of it in the next World! O that they would conſider they hang by ſlender Strings, (a little Breath that expires every Minute) over the bottomleſs Pit, and that within a little while nothing will remain of the Pleaſures of Sin, but the undying Worm, and the ever-living Flames! This would be a means to raiſe and preſerve in them an invincible Reſolution and Reluctancy againſt all temptations to ſin and provoke God. But how hardly are Men induced to exerciſe their Minds on this terrible Object. They think leaſt of Hell, who have moſt reaſon to conſider it. To

To this I must add, that the meer fear of Hell, and the judicial impression upon Conscience from it, is not sufficient to convert Men to God. For that servile Affection, though it may stop a Temptation, and hinder the eruption of a Lust into the gross Act, yet does not renew the Nature, and make Men Holy and Heavenly. There may be a respective dislike of Sin, with a direct Affection to it. Besides, that Religion that is the meer Effect of Fear, will be according to the Nature of its Principle, with resistance and trouble, wavering and inconstant: for tormenting Fear is repugnant to the humane Nature, and will be expelled if possible. In short, the fear of Hell may be only a natural Affection, that recoils from what is painful to Sense. Therefore 'tis the great Design of the Gospel by the fear of Hell, as a powerful Preparative, to make way for the Love of God, who offers Pardon and Indempnity to all returning Sinners, and for the Hope of Heaven the blessed Reward promised to them. No Offers of Mercy will prevail to make Sinners to yield themselves, till they are storm'd by the Terrors of the Lord. But when the fear

Nisi timore incipiat homo Deum colere, non perveniet ad amorem. *Aug.*

fear of Hell has made a Breach, Divine Grace enters and takes poſſeſſion. As the Virtue of the Loadſtone, when encompaſs'd and arm'd with Iron, is increas'd, and draws a far greater weight than when 'tis naked and ſingle; thus the Attractives of Heaven are more powerful to move the Hearts of Men, when enforced from the Terrors of Hell. Now the Love of God, and the Hope of Heaven, are ſpiritual Affections; and the Obedience that flows from them is voluntary from the intire conſent of the Soul, and perſevering.

Laſtly, From the conſideration of the Puniſhment determin'd for Sin, we may underſtand how dear our Engagements are to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. The Rector and Judg of the World would not releaſe the Guilty without a Ranſom, nor the Surety without Satisfaction; and the Son of God moſt willingly and compaſſionately gave his precious Blood the Price of our Redemption. He obtain'd the Spirit of Holineſs, to illuminate our Minds, to incline our Wills, to ſanctify our Affections, without whoſe Omnipotent Grace, neither the Hopes or Fears of things Spiritual and Future, would ever have cleanſed and changed our Hearts and Lives. We are naturally as ſenſeleſs as the Dead, as to what concerns our everlaſting Peace, blind and brutiſh, and without fear; ſhould plunge

our ſelves into Deſtruction, if the Spirit of Power, and of a ſound Mind, did not quicken us and direct us in the way to everlaſting Life. O that we might feel our dear Obligations to him who has *delivered us from the Wrath to come*, and purchaſt for us a Felicity perfect, and without end! I would not leſſen and diſparage one Divine Work, to advance and extol another; but 'tis a Truth that ſhines with its own Light, and is declar'd by our Saviour, that our Redemption from Hell to Heaven, is a more excellent Benefit than our Creation; in as much as our Well-being is better than our Being; and eternal Miſery is infinitely worſe than mere not being. Our Saviour ſpeaks of *Judas*, *It had been better for him if he had never been born.* How engaging is the Love of Chriſt, who rais'd us from the Bottom of Hell to the Boſom of God, the Seat of Happineſs! If his Perfections were not moſt amiable and attractive, yet that he died for us, ſhould make him the Object of our moſt ardent Affections. *To thoſe who believe he is precious*; to thoſe who have felt their undone Condition, and that by his Merits and Mediation, are reſtor'd to the Favour of God, that are freed from tormenting Fears, and revived with the ſweeteſt Hopes, he is and will be eminently and eternally precious. *Bleſſing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, be to Him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.*

FINIS.

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